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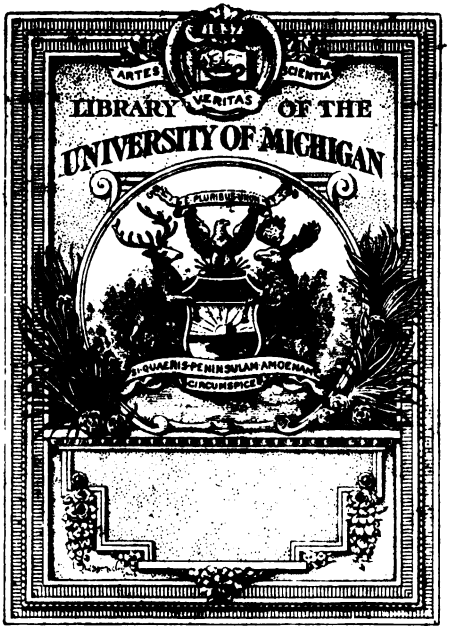
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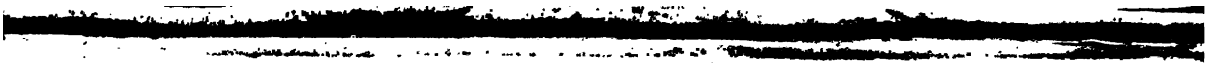

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"CHRIST IS ALL."

"CHRIST IS ALL."

THE

GOSPEL OF THE PENTATEUCH.

BY THE

VERY REVEREND HENRY LAW,
DEAN OF GLOUCESTER. 1797 – 1884

NUMBERS—DEUTERONOMY.

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"CHRIST IS ALL."

THE NUMBERED PEOPLE.

"*Take ye the sum of all the congregation of the children of Israel, after their families, by the house of their fathers, with the number of their names, every man by their polls, from twenty years old and upward, all that are able to go forth to war in Israel.*" NUMB. i. 2, 3.

THESE verses bring us to the camp of Israel still circling Sinai's base. Christian thought—waiting for dews of heavenly grace—delights to linger here. Let us observe the people closely. They are snatched by God's hand from tyrannizing foes. A miracle of care supplies their daily wants. A moving pillar guides their way. The law has been repeated to them amid terrific prodigies. Moreover they are fenced around by strict peculiarities of social custom and of typal worship. Their contact with the world is broken. They move amidst the nations of the earth, as a stream flowing through the ocean's bed, unmingling with contiguous waves. God near, with sheltering arms, is their defence. Goodness and mercy guard their present steps. The land of promised rest is the horizon of their hopes.

Reader, these annals are an historic mirror. They image out a heavenly Father's special dealings with each child of

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faith. In every age and place there is an Israel thus mercifully loved, and led, and fed. The antitype will never fail, till the last Christian's course is run.

Hence precious teaching meets us in the study of this chart. We often err and fail, through dim discernment of our state. Peace would abound, and comforts cheer, and strength put forth more vigour, if right perceptions shed a clearer light. Let us, then, view ourselves in Israel's varied story. Our every step finds counterpart in them.

The parallel is quickly drawn. They once groaned bitterly in cruel bondage. But mercy set them free. Believer, you too were once a slave at Satan's will. He ruled you with an iron yoke. But now the chain is broken, and you rejoice, the ransomed freedman of the Lord. Egypt is escaped. The tyrant holds you not.

Israel's tribes are journeying, as strangers, through a desert-waste. And is not yours a wilderness-career? The abiding country is not here. The rest is far away. But they are convoyed by a heavenly guide. So, too, a beckoning hand marks out your wanderings by day—by night. Is your soul needy? The bread of life fails not. Are you athirst? The wells of life are ever open.

They had heard "the voice of words"—the fiery law. This law has also pierced the deep recesses of your inner man. You have thus learned the glorious righteousness of God—the hateful sinfulness of sin—your ruined state in self. You hence are taught to prize the grace of your curse-bearing Lord, and the rich worth of His imputed merits.

Was Israel God's special portion? You, too, are not your own. You are a purchased property:—a peculiar race. You shun the world, as a forbidden path—a rebel camp—an un-

congenial clime—an alien tribe—a Jael's tent—a land of filth and snares.

This is a scanty outline. Daily experience fills in the picture. Let each similitude be traced. For each is a fruitful school of wisdom and improvement. There is, indeed, no novel thought in this recital. Each Bible-reader knows these things. But common truths—like common blessings—soon lose their point. Colours soon fade without renewing touch. The flame expires, without reviving breath. Reader, be wise, and often trace your own case in this predictive story.

And now, before the people move, God speaks ag n. He gives command to register the Number of each tribe. Account must be distinctly taken. All names must be recorded. Their multitudes must all be reckoned and exactly known.

New instruction meets us here. God ever leads us in a brightening path. Fresh dealings are fresh seeds of wisdom. They call us to discern anew His mind. May, then, this Numbering-act enrich faith's stores!

In common matters, men count possessions, which are choice, and dear, and prized. They, whose mean joys are fixed on this world's pelf—thus calculate their gold. Their coffers are oft opened. Frequent reckonings review the contents. See, too, the watchful shepherd's care. His marking eye perpetually surveys the flock. As they go forth—as they return—the Number is most diligently told.

Do we, then, stray beyond sound limits—do we indulge unfounded fancy—when in God's Numbering we read God's love? Do not clear characters here write, that His people are thus Numbered, because loved—counted, because prized?

This truth extends to all the children of faith's family. My soul, come bow before it. Its worth exceeds all worlds.

There is no blessedness like his, whose glowing gratitude oft realizes, My God loves me:—my name is in His heart. The Lord of all creation esteems me among His choicest jewels.

The knowledge of this fact is reached by happy steps. They are all scripturally firm.

Review them. Wherefore was Jesus sent to bear your sins, and deck you in His robe of righteousness? Why did Jehovah inflict on Him the hell-pains, which were justly yours? Why was Christ slain? Why are you spared? There can be only one reply, God loves you.

And wherefore did the Spirit speed to arouse your sleeping conscience—to show self's ruin, and the remedy of the cross? Why did your inward adamant dissolve, and unbelief melt into faith, and your whole heart clasp Jesus, as its own? There can be only one reply, God loves you.

How is it, that your slender bark still rides above the raging billows of an engulphing world? How is it, that your tottering feet are still upheld along the slippery hill, which leads to Zion's heights? The strength is not your own. It is most freely given. There can be only one reply, God loves you.

When did this love commence?—Tell me, when God began to be, and I will tell you, when His love began. Will not this love expire? Can God be no more God? While God is God, He must be love.

God loves you! Would that the eye of faith for ever rested on this glorious truth!

Heroic might will brace the inner man, just as this thrives and strengthens. God loves you? What an amazing impulse to bear the willing servant over all mountains of doubt, and fear, and hindrance! God loves you! What a strong shield

to ward off Satan's darts! God loves you! It is victory, before one blow is struck. It is a pillow of unfailing peace. It is light in the dark day of trial. It is a cordial of invigorating comfort. It is the holy wing to lift above the world. It is an antepast of a sure heaven.

Next, who are Numbered? The young—the weak—the female—stand apart. None are enrolled, but they, whose age and strength enable them for war.

Christ's service is a mighty work—a valiant struggle—a determined fight. Satan disputes each onward step. We must undauntedly resist. The world presents its countless troops—all quick to wound—and skilled to capture. We must defy them with unwavering front. The flesh is an internal foe—haunting the secret chambers of the heart, and twined around our very being. It gives no respite. No respite must be given to it.

Believer, yours is this warrior-life. Fight, as one fighting for eternity. Strive, as one striving for a kingdom. March, as one resolute to take heaven by storm. Jesus calls—commands—precedes. Follow Him boldly. The Numbered host is Numbered for the fight. The fighting host will soon shout, Victory. No one will triumph, who has never fought. No one, who truly fights, will fail.

Each Numbered soldier paid a ransom-price. Ex. xxx. 12. The rich—the poor—were equally assessed. There was no difference for differing age or state.

The Gospel of this fact is clear. All in Christ's camp are ransomed by His blood. All join the chosen band, confessing, that they need redemption, and glorying in redemption found. All plead one sacrifice. All bring the self-same expiation-price.

Next comes the register. It presents a vast array of Numbered warriors. They stretch beyond six hundred thousand men. Num. i. 46. Whence is this marvellous increase? One family had entered Egypt. Hardship, and cruelty, and toil, had done their worst to keep them low. But now, within the lapse of a short period, they stand an army of this vast extent. Whence is this multiplied expanse?

God's early promise was their portion. "I will make of thee a great nation." Gen. xii. 2. God's purpose never fails. When He has spoken, seeming impossibilities may rise—but all in vain—fulfilment will not tarry. The Numbered People prove, that our God is Truth as well as Love. His promise is a seed, which surely ripens into fruit.

Reader, behold again this multitude. It is an emblem of a far larger host. The conflict will soon end; and then before the throne a countless company will be spread. Rev. vii. 9. They are the saved from every nation—kindred—people—tongue. Their robes are white; for Jesu's blood has washed them. Their hands wave palms; for they have conquered in His name. Say—say—will you rejoice and triumph with them? Say—say—are you now warring, a comrade in these ranks? The fight is prelude to the crown.

About a year has passed since the last Numbering of this family. The Levites then formed part of the collected mass. They are not now included. They stand apart, a separate portion. But mark a wondrous fact. The Number then and now amounts exactly to the same. Israel has surrendered Levi's tribe, but Israel's forces are not thereby less. Here is a profitable lesson. We never lose by giving to the Lord. Selfishness is penury. Christian benevolence is wealth. We often grudgingly withhold. The result is loss, not gain. The

coffers drain not, which supply God's cause. The more thus given is the more possessed. They, who thus lay out, lay up.

Reader, once more survey the Numbered People. You are inclined to say, this band will safely reach the promised land. Surely their willing steps will ever run in the appointed way. Alas! two, and two only, steadfastly adhere. The multitude distrust the Lord. They wilfully provoke. Therefore just indignation dooms them to exclusion. Their corpses strew the desert. And one by one they line the road with graves. They fall, an awful proof, that outward privileges alone save not. Unbelief nullified their many means of grace. It poisoned their cup of blessing. "They could not enter in, because of unbelief." Heb. iii. 19.

Ah! unbelief! It is the sin of sins—the misery of miseries—the hopeless malady—the death of souls—the bar, which shuts out Christ.

Reader, is this vile viper lurking in your heart? Oh! drag it to the cross, and slay it there. Implore the Spirit, by His mighty sword, to hew it into shreds. If it survives, you die. The case is clear. Can he be healed, who scorns the only cure? Can he reach home, who leaves the only homeward path? Can he be cleansed, who flees the only cleansing stream? Can he go in, who will not pass the door? Can he escape from the fast-sinking wreck, who spurns the life-boat? Who can reach God, who puts aside the Mediator? Who can be saved, who tramples down the only Saviour? Unbelief rejects the Gospel, and so perishes. It turns God's truth into a lie, and it goes hence to learn its folly, where faith never comes.—Many may be Numbered, as the Church's sons, who are not Numbered, as the heirs of life.

THE CAMP.

"*Every man of the children of Israel shall pitch by his own standard, with the ensign of their father's house: far off about the tabernacle of the congregation shall they pitch.*" NUMB. ii. 2.

WHEN Balaam looks down upon the outstretched Camp of Israel, his very soul expands. It must break forth in praise. The beauty captivates. The order charms. The evidence is clear—no common people there reside.

He rapturously exclaims, "How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, and thy tabernacles, O Israel!" He paints a landscape of delights. "As the valleys are they spread forth—as gardens by the rivers' side—as trees of lign-aloes, which the Lord hath planted—and as cedar-trees beside the waters." Numb. xxiv. 5, 6. Images of choice fruits—elaborate arrangement—luxuriance,—verdure,—stateliness,—fragrance,—lend colours to depict the scene.

Reader, let us, too, mount the heights of godly meditation, and in spirit view this favoured Camp. And as we gaze, may rays from heaven illumine every part!

The points rich in instruction are—the tents themselves—their order—position—standard.

1. The Tents. Abodes present themselves. They are not splendid palaces, and golden columns, and sparkling capitals, and giant pyramids. They are not reared, as lasting monuments to future times.

The veriest contrast meets the eye. They are poor tents. They stand to-day. To-morrow sees the cords relaxed—the fastenings removed, and a vacant place. They are the pilgrim-dwellings of a pilgrim-troop—the short-lived homes of short-lived sojourners.

This first view instantly reminds of mortal state. What is our tenement? It is nought but clay. These frames have one original—the dust. The vilest reptile and the proudest prince are composites of one poor mire. Is it not folly, then, to pamper and admire this flesh? At best these bodies are a tent—than which creation knows no humbler thing.

How soon they crumble! No care—no thought—no art can lengthen out continuance. The countless families of foregone ages—where are they now? Dust they were. To dust they are gone back. The many families of this our day—whither do they speed? Dust they are—to dust they hasten. The tents must fall. But when? Perchance this very hour. Is he not then the fool of fools, who boasts him of to-morrow's dawn!

My soul, from Israel's tents, you learn, how fleeting is life's day! Press then the question, When I go hence, is an abiding mansion mine? There is a kingdom prepared from the foundation of the world. Is it for me? Christ lives to meeten everlasting homes. Are they for me? Oh! turn not from this Camp, until faith clearly reads its title to the heavenly home.

Flesh is a mean abode. This thought commends the grace of Jesus. He scorned not to assume it. Amazing fact! He took this clothing, as His own. Beneath these rags He hid the glories of His glorious Deity. No man was ever man more thoroughly than Jesus. He tabernacled in manhood's base-

ness, as truly as He shone in Godhead's brightness. He thus descended, that He might endure—suffer—bleed—die—might bear the curse—and hang upon the cross.

This none but man could do, therefore His tent was pitched, as man, among the sons of men. He was made man, that He might be made sin. He was made sin, that He might take it thoroughly away. He sought a lowly tent to do a godlike work.

But soon the degradation passed. Humiliation's vale was left. The cross was triumph's car. And now in heaven—at God's right hand—on glory's throne—the God-man sits. Manhood now shines in Him arrayed in light of Deity. And all, whom faith makes one with Him, will soon behold and share this lustre. Their vile bodies shall be changed. Weakness and frailty shall put on unfading freshness. The lowly bud shall bloom into a glorious flower. The glorious Head will leave no member in decay.

Blessed are they, whose faith discerns Him nailed as their Surety on the tree. He comes—He quickly comes to gild mortality with life. Happy the inmates of these crumbling frames, if only they are Christ's! They now are vilest dust. They soon will shine more brightly than ten thousands suns.

2. The Order. Let Israel's Camp be now more closely scanned. What perfect regularity appears! Rule draws each line. Arrangement is complete. These streets of tents are uniformity's perfection.

One truth is here distinctly written. Our God delights in order. Where He presides, confusion vanishes.

Is it not so in every Christian heart? When Jesus takes the throne, wise rule prevails. Disturbing lusts lie down. Perplexing doubts flee far. Gusts of irregular desire are lulled.

The soul is like the well-set garden, in which method plants each shrub and flower.

Is it not so in Christian life? Each duty occupies its stated post. There is no tangled labyrinth of plans—no misspent diligence—no toil without a purpose. God's worship has its sacred place—and no intruder interferes. The Scripture claims appointed study—and then the door is barred against disturbing entrance. The family demands due care: due care is given. The home—the closet—the public—the world, in turn have claims—in turn are served. Each morning dawns—each evening closes—on a well-ordered scheme of work.

How different is the worldling's day! It seems an upset hive. The notes all jar—movements all jostle. It is a jumbled chaos of desire—attempt—design. Motives conflict with motives—thoughts with thoughts—plans with plans. Why is it so? God rules not. Wisdom holds not the rudder. Therefore the ship is sport to every wind and wave. There is no order, but in the Camp of God.

But in Israel's Camp each tribe has its place. The family of Aaron guard the tabernacle's door. The sons of Levi girdle the holy tent. The other tribes occupy appointed ground. God fixes all the bounds, and all the bounds are gladly kept.

The same all-ruling mind disposes now each member of Christ's body. Each enters on the stage of life, as God is pleased to call. Each runs a pre-ordained course. Each disappears, when the allotted task is done. We see this clear arrangement throughout the Church's history. At the set time the sun of Moses sets: the star of Joshua dawns: the several Judges rule: the several kings ascend the throne. In the right season Paul labours—and apostles preach—and martyrs seal the truth with blood—and each devoted teacher

toils—and each disciple aids the Gospel-cause. God plans each champion's station in the Gospel-Camp.

Reader, bow humbly before this ordering mind. Then discontent will not arise. No murmurings will mourn an obscure lot—a grievous burden—a lengthened pilgrimage—or an early grave. The time—the task—the place—will be regarded as most wisely fixed. What if self-will could make a change? Would it not mar the work on earth, and tarnish the eternal crown? The foot should not desire the hand's employ—or the eye's higher seat. Ephraim is pleased, that Judah leads. Judah would not take Ephraim's rear.

3. The Position. But all these tents share one grand privilege. "About the tabernacle of the congregation shall they pitch." They all have common focus. As the planets circle the sun, so these surround the sanctuary. God is the centre. They form the wide circumference. And from each door one sight—the holy tent—is visible.

Is there no meaning here? There is:—and it is precious. God in Christ Jesus is the centre—the heart—the life—the strength—the shield—the joy of His believing flock. In their midst He dwells—their glory and delight. When they go forth, their eyes are fixed on Him. When they return, it is to nestle round His presence.

Is there no warning here? There is:—and it is wise. Let Christian's ponder this Camp's plan, when called to fix their dwellings upon earth. When weighing the advantages of place, the foremost thought should be, Is God known here? Are His pure truths here clearly taught? There may be rites and forms. But an external fabric is not grace. A heaven-directed spire leads not infallibly to heaven. Ichabod is the name, if God in Christ be not proclaimed.

Soul-profit is real profit. And soul-profit cannot be apart from Christ. Soul-loss is saddest loss—and the soul loses, when not led to Christ. Our children, too, and all who form our household, claim, that their first good be first considered. Was Lot a gainer, when his eye only coveted the fertile plains? How David's pious spirit mourns, when exiled from the house of God! Can fairer fields, or sweeter prospects, make amends for a cold blank within? Can air-salubrity repay for inward sickness and a spiritual decline? What, if any tribe should have receded to spots, from which the cloud could not be seen! The end would have been sure. It was cut off from Israel. So all, who willingly abide far from the Gospel's light, choose present darkness leading to far darker night.

4. The Standard. A standard floats above each tribe. Beneath the well-known sign they rest. And by its side they march.

Believers have an ensign too. The banner over them is Jesu's love. Song ii. 4. Enlightened eyes can never catch these waving folds, and read therein the great Commander's heart.

The standard is a pledge of safety. True, mighty foes hate and assail. True, night and day they plot and rage, and draw the bow, and lay the snare. But they must fail. The fight may be both fierce and long, but in Christ's Camp no follower can finally expire.

Beneath it there is sweet repose. The weary spirit and the worn-out flesh can often watch no more. Unless the vigilance of heavenly love defend, surprise will over-power the fainting bands. But as is the vineyard of the Lord, so is His Camp. "I the Lord do keep it: I will water it every

moment:—lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day." Is. xxvii. 3.

Beside it there is victory. Many have fought beneath the Gospel-banner, and all have triumphed. They, who go boldly forward, looking unto Jesus, assuredly prevail. Paul lifts aloud the happy cry: "Thanks be to God, who always maketh us to triumph in Christ." 2 Cor. ii. 14. What is the one testimony of the saints in light? We strove and conquered "by the blood of the Lamb." We waved His standard and now we wave these palms. We clung to it, and now we wear these crowns. Happy Camp, where Jesus is salvation's Captain—His cross salvation's ensign—His heaven salvation's rest!

Believer, glory in your standard, and be steadfast. Alas! Sometimes shame, and timidities, and fears, have caused ignoble tremblings, and flights, and falls. Peter denied his noble ensign, Deep was his wound, and bitter his repenting sighs. His warning cries, "Quit you like men—be strong." Demas was allured, and left the ranks. Was he recovered from the world's embrace? The all-revealing day alone can tell. But that dread time will show a dastard troop wailing the hour, when they deserted Christ. Cling, then, cling boldly, constantly, to Him. Let every company—moment—place—witness your firm resolves. Wave now and ever the glorious ensign—"Christ is all."

Thus dwell within the Camp, and you will reign upon the throne.

THE NAZARITE.

"*This is the law of the Nazarite.*" NUMB. vi. 21.

HERE a new ordinance appears. It seems a special flower set by God's hand within the garden of the Jewish code. Therefore let special fragrance now be sought by faith, for surely special fragrance may be found.

Israel's whole race was severed from the world. But the wide circumference was girdle to a narrower circle. Where all were separate, the Nazarites occupied special separation.

These stood apart, as a peculiar dedication to the Lord. Amid surrounding columns they rose the highest pyramids. Among God's servants they wore distinguished livery. Where all were nationally holy, they showed the holiest badge.

They bound themselves by voluntary vows. Some mighty motive must have urged their hearts. But it is not revealed. Conjecture may suppose, but cannot be assured. The vow might be the act of men weighed down by consciousness of sin—appalled by sight of inborn evil—or penitent by grievous falls. It might be gratitude for signal mercies. It might be zeal to arouse others to think more of God. But the real cause is veiled. This only is declared, that Nazarites, obeying a strong impulse, gave themselves peculiarly to God.

My soul, the Nazarite here speaks with warning voice to you. Your days, are they devoted service? Your public walk, is it resplendent godliness? Are all observers led to

mark, that you are wholly God's? But surely above all you should be pre-eminently His.

Think of His dealings with you—His tender love—and smiles of never-failing care. Think of your Jesus—His cross—His blood—His wounds—His agonies. Think of the mercy-seat—the interceding prayer—the coming glory—the eternity of bliss. Think of hell merited, and heaven your free-grace home. Surely each morn should see you self-bound by stricter vow—and dedicated to more signal piety.

The Nazarite's motives are unknown. But Nazarite-rules are rigidly prescribed. They are threefold. Let them now be viewed.

1. No juice of grape, no produce of the vine, from kernel unto husk, may touch the consecrated lips. Not only the intoxicating cup is banished far, but all, which grows on the intoxicating tree. Enticement's total troop, from first to last, must be expelled. Like Achan, and his little ones—all must die. Numb. vi. 3, 4.

Believer, this principle is broad and deep. You openly avow, that you are not your own. Your body—spirit—mind and soul—are purchased by redeeming blood. They all are bound a living sacrifice to the one altar—Christ. Hence you must keep them pure—clean—bright—strong—vigorous for His work. They should stand, as servants—with loins girt—ready at all times to discharge His will.

Then sedulously flee whatever, like the juice of grape, may tend to weaken the firm energy, or to stir up the sleeping brood of sensual and ungodly lusts. Alas! what evil lingers still in every saintly heart! A sudden spark may cause a fearful blaze. Keep far from the beguiling cup.

Touch not the kernel or the husk. Flee not strong potions

only, but all that may insidiously corrupt the taste. More than gross vice is branded here. Evils may enter in a pigmy form. At first they may seem harmless, as the gentle dove. Avoid them. They are the cancer's touch. They are the weed's first seed. Rapidly they grow. Fatally they spread. Mightily they strengthen. Soon they pervade the enervated soul.

2. No razor approaches the Nazarite's hair. His flowing locks openly announce his separate state. His head pre-eminently bears the signal of his service. The dedication must not be a seeret act, known only to the conscience and the Lord. The front must witness, that the man is God's. Numb. vi. 5.

Believer, here is another lesson for your life. Religion is not for the closet or the knees alone. It is not a lily, growing only in the shade. It is to be the one attire, in which you move abroad—the holy crown, which sparkles on your brow. It must be conspicuous, as locks pendant from the head. It is not to be cut short or hidden. It must arrest attention. Like the standard, it must proclaim the country, to which the ship belongs.

Christian meekness, and the Spirit's wisdom, never conceal our faith. Truth scorns all pitiful reserve. Bold honesty rejects such timid shame. Pure religion shines as the sun without one cloud. Thus others profit by its rays. Thus, like an attractive magnet, it draw souls to God.

3. He must avoid all contact with the dead. He must not close the eyes of his expiring friends, or catch their parting breath, or bear their corpses to the grave. Among the living he must live. Where life is absent, he must be absent too Numb. vi. 6, 7.

Wherefore is death to be thus shunned? Reasons are obvious. It is the penalty of sin—the sign of God's most righteous wrath. It is a proof of innocence destroyed—of evil touched—of vengeance merited. It is abomination's colleague. Therefore it is emblem of what holy men should holily abhor. Life, too, is God's inseparable essence. He cannot die. Therefore to intermix with death, denotes a separation from our God.

Here is again a rule for Christian walk. He, who is Christ's, must flee the touch of everything allied to sin. The holy garments may not be defiled. The blood-washed feet must shun polluted paths. The vessels for the Master's use may have no stain. The Spirit's temple must be pure. Corruption in no form may soil it.

Believer, rigidly apply this maxim. It drives you from the contagion of ungodly scenes. How many crowds are nothing but a crowded charnel-house! The bodies breathe, but hold no breathing soul. The words—the works—are rank, as an open grave. Arise—depart. The living dwell not amid tombs. The atmosphere pollutes. Depart, touch not the dead.

How many books are deathful! They may have fascinating garb. But they are only gay, as corpses decked with flowers. Their taint destroys. Their chilly touch corrupts.

This rule brands many a pulpit, as a plague-spot. A lifeless teacher often guides in paths of death. No spark from heaven has vivified his soul. What, then, but putrefaction issues from his lips? On earth there is not a more pitiable sight, than death, in a preacher's form, digging the grave of souls.

Here, too, we see the misery of those, who by dead works expect to buy soul-life. All works are dead, which grow not

on the stem of faith. Such are but rotten berries. They live not unto God. How can they purchase life?

But no precautionary care can always keep men from the dying scene. Death has an unrestricted range. It moves among the busy haunts. Its icy hand is everywhere. In every spot it seizes victims. Thus the most watchful Nazarite might most unwillingly stand by the dead.

If so, corruption has been by his side: pollution has polluted him: his vow is broken. Therefore atonement must be made. The ordinance now commands him, as guilty, to seek God. He is required to place a whole burnt-offering on the blazing altar. He must then add a sacrifice for sin. Moreover, as a debtor, he must buy remission by a trespass-offering. Thus the chief types, which shadowed out Christ's blood, must all be brought.

This is not all. The former period of his Nazarate is cancelled. The previous days are counted, as lost time. He must cut short the locks, which hitherto had proved his separate state. He must commence afresh his dedicated walk. Numb. iv. 9—12.

Hark! What a voice here cries, Beware of sudden evil. Satan is a lurking foe. He shoots his darts from hidden ambushes. When all seems safe, a wound is given. There is a pitfall in the firmest paths. Where least suspected, nets are spread. David arose, unconscious of the slippery ground. A few brief moments rolled him in the mire. But there is hope for suddenly-contracted guilt. This type attests this blessed truth. It bids the failing Nazarite to recover his lost state by offerings of blood. Reader, at all times there is open access to a remitting God. There is a Saviour waiting to obliterate. Come, plead His merits:—present His expiating death. There is no stain, which He removes not.

The type, moreover, shows, that pardon found must be the starting-post of new devotedness. The washen feet ascend anew the holy hill. The cleansed hands fight with more vigour. The Nazarite, passing the appointed gate, enters again upon his sacred course.

These reconciling rites were ordered, if the offence were sudden, unintended, and abhorred. But what, if deliberate transgression be indulged? The ordinance is silent here; and thus warns solemnly. Where shall he turn, who turns presumptuously from God? Where is his hope, who boldly touches sin? Reader, never burst conscience-bounds. Grieve not the Spirit's gentle mind. Drive not the holy inmate from your breast. Some, who ran well, have wantonly cast off the gracious yoke. The after-course has been fall upon fall, without a check or turn.

The Nazarate continued only for a fixed time. The days expired. The vow was then discharged. The badge of consecration was laid down.

But grand solemnities attested the completion of this hallowed state. The Nazarite enters the tabernacle's gate. He stands beside the sacrificing altar. He brings each victim, which symbolizes sin's desert. No rite is absent, which confesses need of remission, and trust in reconciling blood. A lamb, as a burnt-offering, dies. A lamb again, as a sin-offering, is wholly consumed. A perfect ram, as a peace-offering, solicits peace. Meat-offerings in every form are piled. Drink-offerings in abundance flow. Voluntary gifts profusely follow. All hair is next shorn off. The fire receives it. It ascends in the ascending flame of the peace-offering. Numb. vi. 13—21.

But wherefore is there this expenditure of blood? What is the purport of this multitude of rites? They all seek expia-

tion. They all look onward to the cross—and thus they graphically show, that holiest deeds of holiest men can only find acceptance through the dying Jesus. For surely this full train of pardon-suing sacrifice distinctly states, that the Nazarite's devoted course still needed to be cleansed.

Believer, is not this the conscious feeling of your humbled soul? You are the Lord's. You strive to serve Him—wholly—unreservedly—for ever. You would bring to Him your every moment—faculty—and power. You would present the offering of your thoughts—your words—your works. But ah! what failures! You would do good—evil is present. In public acts, what inconsistency! In private duties, what outbreakings of corruption! In the closet evil thoughts assail. On the knees the tempter haunts. Some base imagination stains ascending praise. Your self-denial is too often self-indulgence. The badge of Nazarate too often hides a worldling's heart. What then, shall be done? Behold the cross. There is your only help. Thence only is your peace. In that most precious blood you only can obliterate your guilt. Come, wash therein your every duty,—service,—prayer,—thanksgiving. Cleanse there the stains of your most holy hours. Live under vows, as a strict Nazarite. But wrestle for forgiveness, as a sad short-comer.

THE THREEFOLD BLESSING.

"*The Lord bless thee and keep thee: the Lord make His face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: the Lord lift up His countenance upon thee, and give thee peace.*" NUMB. vi. 24, 25, 26.

How gracious is our God in Christ! His mercy overtops the heaven of heavens. Throughout the Bible-page, at every turn, it beams forth in fresh rays. Behold a signal instance. He speaks in these verses, and blessings drop from Him, sparkling as the morning dew—large as Jehovah's heart.

The tribes are now prepared to move. The guiding pillar will soon conduct them into desert-paths. Doubtless they go encircled with all pledges of support. Their cup of favour mantles to the brim. But God still multiplies new stores of comfort. He adds—He superadds—vast bounties. He tells, that all, which heaven contains, shall fall in showers upon their heads.

With this loving mind He thus instructs the priests. "On this wise ye shall bless the children of Israel." The act is ordered. "Ye shall bless." The distinct form of blessing is supplied. "On this wise ye shall bless." He wills to give Is not this grace? He wills, that the vast amplitude of His gifts be evidently seen. Is not this grace on grace?

Mark the broad channel of their course. "The Lord bless thee, and keep thee; the Lord make His face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee; the Lord lift up His countenance

upon thee, and give thee peace." The bounteous God thus opens wide the treasures of His bounty-house: and tells the people, All these riches are for you.

Believer, come now and listen to these sounds, as you sit calmly on your Gospel-heights. You see it is the office of the priest to bless. This introduces Jesus to the eye of faith. He is the Church's blessing Priest. The only Priesthood is wrapped up in Him. The earthly office, ministered by men, long since expired. When His own hands brought His own life a victim to the altar-cross, all typal functions were fulfilled. But now on heaven's throne He ministers. There He presents the ever-fragrant incense of His blood. There He sues out the covenanted mercies. Thence freely He outpours them. He came—He lived—He worked—He died, that He might bless. He gave Himself—the price of blessings. He rose—He took His seat on high, that He might reign a Priest, for ever blessed, and for ever blessing.

Is there a child of Adam's needy race, who covets blessings from the courts of heaven? Let Him approach. There is open way. No fiery sword drives from it. Nay—a gracious hand is ever beckoning—and gracious invitations call. Hasten to Christ. He is the home of blessings.

Do any ask, when did Aaron's sons thus bless the people? On what occasion were these sounds proclaimed? The Spirit gives not a distinct reply. It is conjectured, that when the morning lamb was offered, the happy worshippers were thus dismissed. If so, when they drew near to gaze on emblems of the dying Lord, these notes hymned peace round their departing steps. It is ever true, that no poor sinner can look up to Christ, without receiving harvests of delight. Who can approach, and not retire with overflowing cup?

If the foregoing thought be right, the sons of Israel once only in each day rejoiced in this blessing. It only fell as morning-manna. But now, around the Gospel-camp, the sound unceasingly is heard. There is no moment, when the believer may not be thus cheered. Christ—his Priest—is always near. In every place—in every work—he may realize His voice, and hear the constant music of the mighty blessing. "The Lord bless thee, and keep thee; the Lord make His face to shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee; the Lord lift up His countenance upon thee, and give thee peace." The heavenly voice is never mute. The heavenly sun knows no eclipse.

Next, the terms are aptly chosen to solace individual hearts. Observe—these blessings are not given, as a general store. They are not cast, as handfulls to a crowd: where some may gather much, and some return with none. Far otherwise. They single out each separate child of faith. They call each one alone, and say, Here is a boon for your own bosom-need. Each one, apart from all his fellows, takes for himself a full supply.

These lineaments pervade our Gospel. It proclaims special grace. It brings home direct comfort to each soul. The true believer comes apart from men; he leaves the maze of general mercies; he feels, Christ "loved me, and gave Himself for me," as if redemption centred all in me. He lives in heaven, and prays at God's right hand, and meetens a bright throne, for Me, as if I were His only care. I see my own name foremost on His breast. To me the words come especially, "The Lord bless thee and keep thee; the Lord make His face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee; the Lord lift lift up His countenance upon thee, and give thee peace."

But if there be this special mercy in the singular address, is there not threefold mercy in the triple voice? With tender love Jehovah is thrice named. Blessings are multiplied—again—again—again. Faith quickly grasps the purport. Three glorious persons form the glorious Godhead. Doubtless they are one in undivided essence—one in co-equal majesty—one in co-eval sempiternity—one in the singleness of unchangeable decree—one in the boundlessness of love—one in the exercise of might—one in accomplishment of plan. But there is Trinity in this mystic Unity. One Deity is three in office.

But the whole heart of the Triune Jehovah yearns over the redeemed. They all concur to save. They all combine to help. They all unite to bless. Surely the Threefold Blessing sounds this truth.

Heed—heed again the heaven-sent form. "The Lord," Jehovah the Father, "bless thee and keep thee." Again—"The Lord," Jehovah the Son, "make His face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee." Again—"the Lord," Jehovah the Holy Spirit, "lift up His countenance upon thee, and give thee peace."

Our souls are now prepared to press the juice of these rich clusters.

1. Open the hand wide. The Father comes to fill it. "The Lord bless thee, and keep thee." The first word is large, as God is large. It gives so much, that it leaves nought ungiven. It floods the cup, so that no other drop can enter. It shows a prospect in which there is no vacancy. "The Lord bless thee." May He, who speaks, and it is done; who wills, and it must be; who holds all power in His hands; who sits on the high throne of universal rule, may He bless thee!

When? Now and ever—throughout the moments, which are and shall be—when you go out—come in—sit down—rise up—through all your living space, and when the last breath flutters on your lips.—"The Lord bless thee."

Where? In every place, in which you tarry, or to which you move; in the closet—at the domestic board—at home—abroad—in still retreat, and in the busiest haunts—in the publicity of open work—and in the sanctity of holiest spots.—"The Lord bless thee."

How? By causing all things to minister to your true good—by crowning your lot with all real happiness. "The Lord bless thee."

Perhaps the soul, conscious of weakness, finding self to be a broken reed, and seeing many perils all around, sighs especially for protection. Be it so. Protection here is stretched out, as a shield: help is extended, as a sustaining arm. It is added, "and keep thee." From what? From every foe's injurious assault—from every secret dart—from every direct attack—from self—from men—from evil's legion—from the world's smile and frown. How? By the shelter of His shadowing wings. How long? Until all need is past, and danger's region is quite left behind, and heaven's safe haven is attained. Happy believer—thus blest—thus kept of God!

2. Jesus comes next. "The Lord make His face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee." The greatest change on nature's brow is when light dawns. Gloom dwells beneath the pall of night. When clouds cast their thick shade, dark chilliness prevails. But with returning beams the landscape sparkles, the groves are melody, the fields are joy. It is so with the soul. Sad are the hours, which are not bright with Jesus. Then sins affright, and wrath dismays, and all the

future is despair. There is no misery like the absence of His look. But when His face again is seen, the heart is happiness, the lips are praise. This blessing promises the shining of His face—not a brief ray, but the full blaze of concentrated love. Heaven's fulness is to see Him face to face. Heaven's foretaste, is to catch this earnest of His smile. "The Lord make His face shine upon thee."

Here, too, a precious pearl is added. It is grace. The words proceed, "and be gracious unto thee." What wonders are wrapt up in grace! Its birth is in the heavens—its fruit upon the earth. It looks on those, in whom no merit dwells. It sees them lost. But still it loves, and pities, and relieves. It drew salvation's scheme. It named salvation's sons. It reared the cross, and led the Saviour to it. Apart from Christ—it has no being—and no admission-door to its beloved work. But now, through Christ, its visits come on sanctifying wing. The graceless become gracious, because grace works. The gracious become glorious, because grace triumphs.

3. The blessing voice still speaks. "The Lord lift up His countenance upon thee, and give thee peace." Can they, who have received so much, need more? But more is wondrously given. The truly blessed have all the blessings of a Triune Jehovah. Hence the Spirit's favour is moreover pledged. Some covet earthly honours and applause. Some seek the bursting coffer and the large estate. But what is earth, and all its contents, compared to this possession? The Spirit's countenance converts the soul from death to life, and raises it from hell to glory. He shows its utter need, and its recovery in Christ. He teaches the vile loathsomeness of sin—and the just punishment of hell. He then reveals the God-man slain—the shelter of His wounds—the mantle of His righteousness.

He points to welcoming arms. He testifies, that none can perish at the cross. When He lifts up His countenance, the mists of ignorance, the clouds of unbelief, melt off—and self is seen, that it may be abhorred—and Christ is seen, that He may be embraced and loved. Then peace will surely follow. There is no peace in soul-blindness, in distance from Christ, in unsubdued iniquity, in wallowing in nature's mire. But when the Spirit joins the soul to Christ: when He renews the nature, and sows seeds of Godliness: then peace—abundant peace—peace always, by all means, establishes glad sway.

Reader, seek Christ—adhere to Him—abide in Him—make Him your all—then will this Threefold Blessing be your crown. Hear it once more. "The Lord bless thee, and keep thee; the Lord make His face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee; the Lord lift up His countenance upon thee, and give thee peace."

It is the gift of gifts—the prize of prizes—the Father's full protection—the Saviour's smiling grace—the Spirit's countenance and peace. Reader, do you ask, Can such transcendant property be mine? Pause—think. Wherefore is it thus revealed? God speaks these blessings, not to mock, but to fulfil. Can they be mine? Oh! cast yourself without one fear on Christ, and you will quickly know.

THE SILVER TRUMPETS.

"*Make thee two Trumpets of Silver.*" NUMB. x. 2.

SINAI'S ordinances here end. The hallowed mount must now be left. But ere the onward-signal sounds, God speaks again. A final token testifies, that Israel's every matter occupies His heart.

A mandate issues to form Trumpets. In number they are two. Their metal is pure silver. As in the golden candlestick, each is constructed from one piece. There is no joint—no link—no mixture. The priests alone may use them. Their purpose is four-fold.

1. Their liquid note convenes assemblies to the tabernacle-door. 2. They sound, when the moving pillar calls the tribes to march. Numb. x. 2. 3. They warn, when hostile armies threaten battle. Numb. x. 9. 4. On festive day they peal melodiously around the blood-stained altar. Such are these Trumpets:—such their use. Each order is divine.

Reader, this is our grace-day. We live, that we may glean soul-profit. The Bible is our harvest field. Here this ordinance now meets us, and offers no small riches to our store.

An obvious thought stands on the threshold. We see God's all-pervading care. He directs all things for His people's weal. Their least arrangements are arranged in heaven.

How happy, then, is the child of faith! The grand concerns

of his eternal home are firmly settled. The door is opened—the passport is provided—fit robes are wrought, by the God-man's redeeming work. A new heart, meet for pure joys, is created by the Spirit. But this is not all. Heavenly plans are not restricted to these heavenly things. Each little matter on the earthly stage is offspring of decree. The countless links in each day's chain are framed above. The way, then, must be right, because divinely marked. Chance guides no vessel through life's waves.

Reader, hence learn to scorn no matter, as too small for thought. There are no trifles in a soul's career. An atom sometimes seems to turn the scale for heaven or hell. Make conscience of each trivial event. It has an influence on eternity. When God appears to order two Silver Trumpets for the camp, surely He stamps all little things with magnitude.

The material must be silver. This is a metal carefully prepared. Repeated fires cleanse it from all dross. Hence it is emblem of rare purity. "The words of the Lord are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times." Ps. xii. 6. Each vessel in the camp of God must be thus clean. "Holiness becometh Thine house, O Lord, for ever." Ps. xciii. 5. Ministers should precede with silver-brightness. The flock should follow, as silver without alloy.

Let us now draw nearer to the camp. Two priests are seen. Each blows a Silver Trumpet. Light falls hence on the office of God's ministers. Their voice should sound with trumpet-clearness through the flock. They are intrusted with God's message to a fallen world. Theirs is the privilege to tell the story of redeeming grace. They bear grand tidings, which are life to the dead—health to the sick—liberty to the captive—joy to the mourner—comfort to the broken-hearted—wealth

to the poor—sight to the blind—recovery to the lost—strength to the weak. As heralds, they have to announce, that God is reconciled—a ransom found—a remedy provided—a Saviour given—a Deliverer sent. It is their work to cry, Behold the cross:—look to the dying Lamb—flee to His sheltering arms—hide in His wounded side—nestle beneath the covert of His wings—put on the glories of His righteousness—trust in His finished work—plead His atoning sacrifice—present by faith His wrath-appeasing death—receive Him, as all wisdom, joy, and peace—cling to Him through life, in death, for ever—in answer to all Satan's wiles, and conscience-fears, shout, Christ is All. They have to warn of the world's murderous arts—of sin's tremendous doom—of fire, which is never quenched—of anguish, which exceeds all thought—of an eternity in darkness and despair.

Should they not, then, with clarion-shrillness, rouse the flock? The Silver Trumpets sent a piercing note. So should the Gospel-herald utter aloud the Gospel-news. Away with timid whisper, and a stammering tongue. The servant's lips should glory in the master's name. Let statements be clear, as the sun without one cloud—pellucid, as the crystal stream—distinct, as the unmuffled trumpet's voice.

Note, the Trumpets were of one piece. So is the Gospel-message. It knows no mixture. It is no piece-meal fabric. It is not partly grace and partly works. It calls not men to finish what the Lord commenced. From first to last—in origin—in progress—in conclusion—Gospel-salvation is a free gift. All merit is in Christ. He opens heaven. He closes hell. He washes, decks, and meetens. He presents His children pure and faultless. Their pardon and their fitness is His work. They follow Him, because He calls. They love, because He

wins their hearts. They conquer, because He is their sword and shield. They persevere, because His hand upholds. Their grace is offspring of His love. Their glory is the payment of His worth. Thus Christ is All. No diverse metal soiled these Trumpets. No intermingling error should soil pulpits.

The type, moreover, fixes attention on the Christian as a worshipper—a pilgrim—a warrior—a son of joy. For let the occasions, on which these Trumpets sounded, be now more closely marked.

1. They call the people to God's sanctuary. Reader, mark this. It is a Gospel-ordinance, that worshippers should throng the holy courts—that public prayer and praise should reverence the glorious name. Who will not hasten to obey? Who will not join the people, who keep holy-day? A saintly congregation is an antepast of heaven. It is earth's holiest scene. What sanctity pervades the spot! What blessedness inspires the company! The triune God is mighty in the midst. The Spirit intercedes within the soul. He prompts longing desires. He makes sin's burden to be felt. He deepens penitential grief. He fans the flame of wrestling supplication. He brightens the torch of love. The great High-Priest draws near. He takes each prayer, and washes it in cleansing blood. He perfumes every note of praise. He then presents the fragrant sacrifice before the throne. The Father is well-pleased. The service is accepted. Pardons are sealed.—Blessings fly down. The faithful meet to honour God. They honour and are honoured. They come in faith, and they depart in peace.

Reader, think not, say not, that such assemblage is superfluous. Doubtless God is not linked to means He can bless in solitude, and hear in the secluded closet. But it has

pleased Him to order public worship. His commands are always gain. The pious congregation thrives. Faith hears—obeys—and finds obedience to be wealth.

2. They give command to march. Christians are portion of a marching host. The Bible warns, that earth is not our rest. We live a stranger-life. We occupy a moving tent. We hold a pilgrim-staff. What is there stationary here? Our days are a fast-flowing stream. The rapid current rushes onward. Let then no heart cast anchor on these sands. Let not affection twine its fibres around earthly stems. Our mansions are on high. Our home is far away. Let loins be girt. Let all be ready for departure. Death should not find a Christian unequipped for march. It is a friend, for whom expecting eyes should watch. The ears should listen for the chariot-wheels. When it appears, let there be no tremor—no surprise—no work unfinished. The Gospel's Silver Trumpets ever cry, Arise, Depart. Come up hither.

3. They sound for war. The life of faith is one incessant fight. Beneath the cross, a sword is drawn, of which the scabbard is cast far away. The attitude of bold defiance is assumed. Until the victor's crown is won, unflinching combat must go on. The foes are many—mighty—wily—restless. They meet us, at each step. They lurk in every corner. They infest our public walk. They enter our closed doors. They are without—around—within. Count, if you can, the hateful legions, who compose hell's hosts: they all rush at the soul. Survey the world—its snares—its foul seductions—its enticing arts—its siren-smiles—its venom sneers—its terrifying threats. Each in its turn assails—and each, when foiled, renews the assault. Behold the heart, and all its brood of lusts and raging passions. How often it betrays!

How often it beguiles! The Gospel-trumpet ever cries, Battle is near. Stand firm. Resist.

But when the Gospel calls, it promises sure triumph. It gives an armour, wrought of God. This, rightly used, cannot be broken. It points to a Captain, by whose side no battle can be lost—beneath whose banner, no warrior was ever slain.

Believer, hear, and go forth in hope. Face all your foes. Grasp manfully your sword. Use skilfully your shield. Lift up the head, safe in salvation's helmet. Shout boldly your great Leader's name. The fight will soon be over. The victor's song will soon be on your lips.

4. They have a further use. In the grand feasts they cheer the worshippers around the bleeding victims. While the altar streams, and happy crowds look on, the heavens resound with these exulting clangs. The precept is obeyed, "Sing aloud unto God our strength: make a joyful noise unto the God of Jacob." Ps. lxxxi. 1.

Believer, thus, too, the Gospel teaches you to joy—to joy with heart abounding with melodious praise, when you in faith contemplate, and in worship plead, the meritorious death of Christ.

My soul, obey, remember Calvary, and sing—shout—pour forth music of delight. Let all, that is within you, swell the adoring chorus. Gaze on the cross: and let exulting hallelujahs testify, how fervently you love—how rapturously you extol—how undoubtingly you trust, that death, which is your life—that blood, which is your ransom—those wounds, which are your shelter—that Jesus, who is your full salvation—that Christ, who is your All.

Reader, the Gospel-trumpet is now within your hearing. But it is prelude of another clang. Yet a little while, and

"the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout—with the voice of the Archangel and the trump of God." 1 Thess. iv. 16. That note will open every grave, and wake the sleeping dust, and gather mankind to the great white throne. Quickly you will hear it: for every ear shall hear. It introduces the coronation-day of saints. It is the knell of execution to the lost. Are you prepared? Do you stand ready—one with Christ? If you heed now the Gospel-trumpet calling you to Him, you will hear then the last-day-trumpet calling you to glory.

It is faith's happiest hour, when it goes forth in spirit to intermingle in the fast-coming scene. "We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last Trump: for the Trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. Then shall be brought to pass the saying, that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" 1 Cor. xv. 51—55.

My soul, hark! hark! This trumpet soon will sound. Bless Jesus—and fear not.

THE INVITATION.

"*Moses said unto Hobab, the son of Raguel the Midianite, Moses' father-in-law: We are journeying unto the place, of which the Lord said, I will give it you: come thou with us, and we will do thee good: for the Lord hath spoken good concerning Israel.*" NUMB. x. 29.

ISRAEL'S sojourn round the mount is over. The pillar is about to wave its beckoning hand. The silver trumpets are prepared to sound. The happy tribes are ready for the march. Soon all will be an onward progress toward the promised land.

The sight strongly arrests a Christian heart. Who can survey it, and not cry—Blessed are they, who follow a preceding God! Father, lead me, guide me, keep me to the end!

At this moment the eye of Moses turns with tender yearning to his kinsman Hobab. He for a while had been the comrade of these tribes. Thus he had learned, that they were God's peculiar care. The mighty proofs of present Deity were all familiar to His mind. But outward evidence alone conveys not inward grace. He is not fixed. His feelings fluctuate. He hesitates. He casts a lingering look towards the attractions of an early home. The former ties retain their hold. The well-known scenes allure him back. Like Lot's wife, his eyes revert. While Israel girds the pilgrim-loins, he meditates to retrocede.

Moses well knew, that to return was wreck of soul. It is no gain to move from God. There is no profit in forbidden

paths. Happiness departs, when God is left. All earth is but a barren waste, without the dew of grace. All is a void, unless God smiles and fills.

Moses had the experience of the better choice. He scorned the courtly pomp. He had trampled on all Egypt's treasures. He had embraced affliction with God's people. And he had found God's favour to be wealth of wealth—the joy of joys.

Reader, make God your own, and you have all. To barter Him for lower things, is to clasp a shadow—snatch a husk—pursue a mocking taper—lean on a broken reed. There is no penury like a worldling's lot. What is a crown upon a godless head? What is a sceptre in a graceless hand? What is all gold to an impoverished soul? What were the plains of Sodom to ease-seeking Lot? Had Lazarus or Dives the happier heart?

Moses beholds the doubting Hobab. He pities—and he fain would win him to a wiser choice. Therefore he thus tenderly expostulates. "We are journeying unto the place, of which the Lord said, I will give it you: come thou with us, and we will do thee good: for the Lord hath spoken good concerning Israel."

He states the fact. We are indeed a moving camp. Our rest is yet far off. But we advance not as uncertainly. We follow no deceiving guide. There is a home conspicuously bright in view. It glitters in the rays of heavenly pledge. God's love, and word, and power, secure it.

And then he pressingly invites, "Come thou with us." Turn not away. Recede not to a heathen land. Join not again the people, whose home is darkness—whose walk is misery—whose end is woe. But cleave to us. All good is then your portion. We move not blindly. God's voice is

gone forth, strewing blessings round us. Goodness and mercy from His courts walk, as companions, by our side. He dwells in us. We dwell in Him. Come, then, come then with us.

So Moses reasoned—so he called.

1. His invitation shows faith's happy state. It is a mirror reflecting the features of calm trust. Full faith has eagle-eye. It penetrates all earthly mists. It gazes steadily on Zion's highest light. It is content to live a stranger-life on earth. It would not settle in this thorny nest. It would not lie down beside such poison-streams. This climate is too cheerless. It looks aloft. Its true affections centre round a purer scene. So daily it moves forward. And nightly realizes, that an upward step is made. "We are journeying unto the promised place."

What is this place? Faith gazes—it ever gazes with increasing rapture: but it fails fully to describe.

It is rest. The happy inmates go no more out. No further step is needed. No loftier summit can be scaled. The pilgrim lays aside his staff, and sits down in undisturbed delight. The warrior's wounds are healed. His struggles and his conflicts cease. The watch-tower is exchanged for sure repose. The sword has found its sheath. The shield wearies the arm no more. No foe can enter into victory's domain. Reader, do you not long to reach it?

It is perfect purity. Earth's misery is sin. Saints groan, because they so oft stumble. The constant struggle and the frequent fall cause anguish. The flesh is weak. Temptations fiercely and most craftily assail. The garments contract stains. But in this place sin cannot come. The temper is barred out. No step again can be unclean. No thought again can go astray. Heaven would not be welcome to a new-born man, unless it

were one flood of godlike purity. Reader, do you not long to reach it?

It is joy. Where sin is absent, peace must reign. Where God is present, happiness must overflow. Heaven is a boundless ocean, in which each swelling wave is pleasure in the highest. It is a prospect ever widening, in which each scene is rapturous delight. It is a firmament, for ever brightening, in which each orb is sparkling ecstacy. It must be so: for love is the one pulse in every heart: praise is the endless sound from every lip: hallelujah the one ceaseless echo. The blessed cannot cease to sing, because fresh views of their thrice-blessed state continually arise. It must be so: for they behold the glories of their Lord—not in dim distance—not through the varying medium of faith—but near, and never to depart—but clear, and ever clearer. Transporting joy! daily to read new glories in the face of Christ—daily to dive into the deep wonders of the love of God. Reader, do not you long to be there?

Faith holds the title deeds of this celestial mansion. The word is spoken. "I will give it you." It is a gift—and a gift worthy of the God, who gives—worthy of the blood, which bought—worthy of the Spirit who calls to it. No human spirit pays the price. No human strength can scale the steps. No human hand opens the gate. Some proudly hope for heaven, as if they had some claim. But none go proudly in. They all fall low before the throne, shouting glory to free-grace—Salvation to the Lamb—"Christ is All."

But it is sure. "I will give it you." Who utters this wondrous promise? Even the Lord, whose might is almightiness: before whom all men, and all the hosts of hell, are nothing, and far less. Let every foe swell into millions of

ten millions—let all their power be thousand-fold increased—His arm can shiver them to dust—His breath can drive them, as a feather on the hurricane's wing. The Lord, whose word is truth—whose counsels are immutability—whose purpose ever stands—says, "I will give it you." Faith hears and knows, that every wave and every gale convey it prosperously to the assured haven. "We are journeying unto a place, of which the Lord said, I will give it you: come thou with us." Such is faith's happy state. Reader, have you this faith?

2. This invitation shows, that faith is aggressive. "Come thou with us." Each heaven-set plant strives for expanse. True grace has one sure sign: it longs and labours to communicate its wealth. A saving view of Christ slays self—relaxes every icy band—widely extends embracing arms, and yearns to multiply delights. When the heart burns, the life must labour. Where is the fire, which emits no warmth? Where is the sun, which darts forth no rays? Thus the history of faith is a chart of plans and toils for Christ.

It looks around. It first marks the Hobabs of the home-circle. It stops not here. It takes a wider prospect. It surveys the neighbouring abodes. It then mounts higher ground, and flies around the circumference of the native land. It still ascends, and in the telescopic gaze of love, it comprehends the world, with its broad circuit, and all its mass of people—kindred—tongues.

While it thus muses, what is the deep desire? Oh! that these souls might be the heirs of heavenly life! Their nature-state dooms them indeed to wrath. Their steps unturned must bear them down to hell. Their hearts unchanged must link them to the lost. But Jesus died, and in that death there is redemption. But Jesus lives, and while He lives, who

can despair? If only they can hear of Him: if the sweet mercies of the Spirit help: if faith convey them to the cross—then soul-graves open—then endless misery flees, as night before the orb of day—then hell is spoiled, and angels shout.

While faith thus pants with longing hopes, it asks, How shall this be? The answer is at hand. God tells what aid must be employed. The means are the clear proclamation of the Gospel-truth. And this proclamation is from preachers' lips. Then preachers must be sent forth. The men of God, with Christ on their lips—the Bible in their hands—must take their stand between the living and the dead. They must lift high the Gospel-beacon amid a lost world's night. Rejoicing in their known salvation, they must importunately urge, "We are journeying unto the place, of which the Lord said, I will give it you: come thou with us, and we will do thee good."

Faith then will hasten to give far-flying wings to these appointed means. This holy zeal became the parent of missions to home-destitute and distant heathen. Hence arose that precious brotherhood of combined believers, who send salvation's tidings far and near. But how scanty are their efforts before a world's need! How crippled are the sinews of their strength! How poor their coffers! How few their labourers!

Reader, are you the called of Christ? Are you a traveller to the promised place? Then show it by your self-denying succour to these enlisting labourers. Help them, for they need it. Help them, for the time is short. Help them, for the Lord requires it. Help them, as you would have sure token in the day of Christ, that you obeyed His mandate, and that your faith was not a barren stock.

But perhaps some Hobab reads these lines, who is not

pressing on to Zion's joys. Sir, pause and reflect. This tract, with Moses-like entreaty, grasps your hand, and looks you tenderly in the face, and knocks imploringly at your heart's door. It asks with loving zeal, Whither do your footsteps tend? It prays you to turn and join yourself in heavenly fellowship to heaven-bound travellers. "Come thou with us."

Your present path is misery—briers—thorns—rough places—pitfalls—disappointments, all sloping towards hell. Before us there is peace, and an eternity of light. Turn, "come thou with us." The world, and sin, and Satan, pierce with death-wounds. But "we will do you good." Behold the Saviour, whom we love, and trust, and serve. Can you depart from Him? Oh! mark His tender grace—His zeal for souls—His surety-sufferings—His guilt-expiating agony. Can you quit Him? Think of His patience—His frequent calls—His precious promises—His outstretched arms. Think of the rapture of His seen smile—the comfort of His felt presence—the calm delights of converse with Him, and the full glories of His near kingdom. Think of the dying Lamb—the risen Lord—the reigning and triumphant King. "Come thou with us." Jesus has spoken good concerning Israel.

May the mighty Spirit prompt the quick reply, Grace conquers, and I come! May hesitation hide its face in shame! May wise decision make you Christ's for ever.

THE RISING AND THE RESTING PRAYER.

"It came to pass, when the ark set forward, that Moses said, Rise up, Lord, and let Thine enemies be scattered; and let them, that hate Thee, flee before Thee: And when it rested, he said, Return, O Lord, unto the many thousands of Israel." NUMB. x. 35, 36.

WHEN the ark moves, a praying voice is heard. When the tribes halt, and tents receive them, again it sounds. Prayer consecrates the going forth and coming in. It opens the door for egress. It bolts the resting-place. It is the vanguard to precede. It is the rear-guard to lock in. It sanctifies the extreme links: and so the entire chain.

My soul, oft view this teaching fact. Moses begins and ends with hands—with eyes—with heart—uplifted. The first—the last look, is towards heaven. He seeks a journeying blessing ere he stirs. He asks a resting blessing when he rests.

This is true wisdom and real grace. Happy the life, which is one flow of prayer! It is the pilgrim's staff—the warrior's sword—the pillow of the weary—the refuge of distress—the cry, which proves the man to be new-born. It is the wing, on which the soul flys upward. It is the tongue, which asks—the hand, which takes—great things. It has free access to a mercy-seat, and there it carries on a gainful trade.

Believer, to you each day is a new journey. Each circumstance is an onward step. Each morning calls you to a march.

Each night is as the spreading of a resting tent. Each finished work is as another pause in your advancing pilgrimage. Let then your progress be one stream of supplication None ever prayed enough. Many in life and death bewail soul-poverty. The cause is poverty of prayer. Much is ill-done—much is undone—because prayer is not well done. What scales can weigh the profit, which might thus be earned! What thought can estimate the loss, which prayerless hours incur!

"Rise up, Lord." "Return, O Lord." Such is the Rising and the Resting Prayer. There is strong purport in the petitions. They are as arrows wisely pointed to a mark. They breathe a definite design. They are not weak in vagueness of unmeaning generality. Some prayers are forms, in which no feature is exact. The words are many, but clear thought is rare. But true grace always realizes need. And then distinctly seeks relief. It asks with known and felt intent.

Let, now, the substance of these prayers be sifted.

1. The Rising Prayer. "Rise up, Lord, and let Thine enemies be scattered: and let them, that hate Thee, flee before Thee." Here is confession, that Israel's onward path was thronged with foes. It is so still, and so will always be. Opposing armies are in front. Each step must be through hostile ranks. The rest is reached through many a fight. The Canaanite—the Amorite—the myriads of Satan's seed—still live. They leave no stratagem untried—no weapon unemployed. There is no hour, when sword and shield may hang unused.

Next Moses feels, that his own might is nought: vain are his counsels: powerless is his arm. When not upheld, he falls. Unaided, he is driven back. His hope—His trust—his strength—his armour—his success—his triumph—are from

God. Therefore to God he flees. "Rise up, Lord." So now, if God's right hand be not our help, the tide of foes must bear us down. But God is moved by importunities of faith. "Rise up, Lord," is a cry, which brings all heaven to aid. It puts sure victory on the wing.

Observe here, how the prayer of faith yearns for God's glory. "Let thine enemies be scattered." These enemies hate God. They would impede the progress of His truth. They would extinguish His word's light. They would cast down His righteous rule. Can faith sit still and see Him thus dethroned? Oh! no. It agonizes with desire, that He would vindicate His holy cause—uphold His honour, and add trophies to His name. "Rise up, Lord, and let them, that hate Thee, flee before Thee."

Believer, act out this pattern. Be zealous for God's kingdom. Let every thought centre in Him. Strive that He may increase. Let Him be magnified—exalted—glorified—and then care not, that self lies low.

Realize, too, your oneness with the Lord. His life is your life. His death is your death. His resurrection is your revival. In Him you died, and rose, and sit now at God's right hand. So too, His cause, His foes are yours; and yours are His. Thus, when temptations fiercely try, you may appeal to Him, These are Thy conflicts: "Rise up, Lord." These weapons seek Thine injury: "Rise up, Lord, and let Thine enemies be scattered: and let them, that hate Thee, flee before Thee."

2. The Resting-Prayer. "Return, O Lord, to the many thousands of Israel." The going forth would have been ruin, except the Lord moved in front. The rest will be no rest, unless the Lord return. Prayer called Him to precede their

steps. Prayer calls Him to abide around their resting tents. Vast was the multitude. But what are numbers without God! His presence is their power—their peace—their joy—their glory—their strength—their fortress—their shield, and their repose. They know it, and they cry, "Return, O Lord."

Reader, what is your home—what is your heart—if God be absent? That family alone is blessed, in which God has His constant seat. The board is a sweet feast, when He presides. The circle beams with pure delights, when He is seen in every smiling look. The house is sheltered, when His wings spread the canopy around.

But is God willing to abide with men? His word expels all doubt. The promises hang in clusters. "Draw nigh to God, and He will draw nigh to you." Jam. iv. 8. Do you ask, But how can one so vile, so mean—so hateful through iniquity—so stained with sin's polluting filth—draw nigh to one so holy and so high? A ready path is open. Christ is the way. Flee to His arms, and you reach God. In Christ distance is swallowed up: and union is cemented.

Hear next Christ's sweet assurance. "If a man love me, he will keep my words! and my Father will love him, and We will come unto him, and make our abode with him." John xiv. 23. Give then your heart to Christ. Make His commands your constant walk. And then you are the temple of His presence. He will come in, and with Him all the glories of indwelling Deity.

Heed, too, the wondrous word. "Thus saith the high and lofty One, that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy: I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit." Is. lvii. 15. Then ask the Spirit

to lead you along humility's low vale. God will meet you there, and make your heart His home. Thus you may be filled with all the fulness of your God—your soul may be a present heaven—your eye may ever rest upon His smile—your ear may ever hear the whispers of His love. At the close of every hour—duty—conflict, pray with undoubting faith, "Return, O Lord," and surely God will come.

We are next taught, that these petitions have enduring life. They are a model to the end of time. Let none suppose, that, when the ark crossed Jordan, they were cast aside. Nay rather, they flow on a never-failing stream. They blossom, as an ever-verdant tree. Let David give the proof. When ages had flown by, he brought the ark, with joyful pomp, to Zion's hill. Where shall his heart find fitting praise? These words supply it. "Let God arise, let His enemies be scattered: let them also, that hate Him, flee before Him." Ps. lxviii. 1. My soul, may you, too, ever use this Prayer—at all times fit.

But these high words from David's lips open a more glorious view. When he thus sings beside the ark, he has an onward look to Christ. He sees redemption's Lord riding in redemption's car. He lauds Him, as the mighty conqueror travelling in triumph's pomp. Else, why should he add, "Thou hast ascended on high—Thou hast led captivity captive: Thou hast received gifts for men, yea, for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among them?" Ps. lxviii. 18. Thou hast done gloriously, as salvation's Captain. All Thy foes, where are they? They have fled. They are all scattered, as the dust before the wind.

Thus the Rising and the Resting Prayer, beside the rising and the resting ark, lead us directly to our conquering and

our coming Jesus. Faith claps the hand, and sings aloud, Here is my Lord.

Yes, the moving ark is type of Jesus going forth to cast down rebel foes. It is high joy to trace the Antitype's victorious march. How mightily the Lord advanced! The strength of God was in His arm. His sword was Deity. His darts were barbed with all Jehovah's might. "He had on His vesture and on His thigh a name written, King of kings, and Lord of lords." Rev. xix. 16. His foes, indeed, strove mightily. It was no easy work, to rescue souls from Satan's grasp—or to lay low the prison-house of darkness. The enemy rushed on, clad in his fiercest armour—wild in his keenest rage—wily in his deadliest crafts. He plied His every temptation, as a terrific battery. But the true Ark never quailed. The adversary licked the dust. Malignant passions maddened in opposing breasts. The kings stood up—rulers took counsel—all plots were laid—the ignominious death was planned and executed. But still the Ark moved on. The cross gave aid—not injury. The grave could not detain. Death could not vanquish. The gates of hell fly open. The mighty conqueror appears. And as in Canaan, the ark ascended Zion's hill amid triumphant shouts, so Jesus mounts on high. The heaven of heavens receives Him. The Father welcomes the all-conquering Saviour. Angelic hosts adore the glorious God-man. The Rising Prayer has full accomplishment, "Rise up, Lord, and let Thine enemies be scattered, and let them that hate Thee flee before Thee."

And now from glory's throne He cheers His humble followers in their desert-march. Their toils, their conflicts, and their fears are many. They ofttimes seem, as a poor worm beneath the crushing feet. But they survive—they prosper—

they lift up the head. As of old the ark was victory: so Jesus is victory now. Yes—every child of faith shall surely set a conquering foot upon the host of foes. Hear this, ye mad opposers, and desist. Where are the nations, who resisted Israel? Where are the Pharaohs—the beleagured kings—the Herods—the chief priests—the Pilates? Share not their malice, lest you share their end. Read in this word your near destruction, "Rise up, Lord, and let Thine enemies be scattered, and let them that hate Thee flee before Thee."

And as the Rising Prayer has never failed, so, too, the Resting Prayer now teems with life. "Return, O Lord." Jesus is ready to fly back. Israel's many thousands wait, but wait not in vain. "Yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry." Heb. x. 37. Oh! joyful day! triumphant sight! What ecstacy! what shouts! what glory! Salvation's Lord returns. Welcome—welcome to Him!

Reader, what will be your state on that bright morn? Will your lips shout, "This is the Lord, we have waited for Him?" What is the answer of your heart? Is it now swelling with the cry, "Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly?" "Return, O Lord, to the many thousands of Israel."

This is the grand event, for which the earth now sighs. And will it tarry long? Scripture hath long since said, "The coming of the Lord draweth nigh." "The Judge standeth before the door." James v. 8 9. Believer, be wise. Be looking from your watch-tower. Are there no rays streaking the horizon? Extend the listening ear. Is there no sound of chariot-wheels in startling events?

ESCHOL.

"They came unto the brook of Eschol, and cut down from thence a branch with one cluster of grapes." NUMB. xiii. 23.

WE reach the brook of Eschol through a humbling path. Before we touch its clustering grapes, let the dark steps be traced. The story shows, how vile is man—how gracious is our God! It proves our proneness to transgress. It then presents an emblem of the heavenly bliss.

When Sinai is left, the march of Israel advances prosperously. There is no check. No enemy annoys. No difficulties hinder. Each day the intervening wilderness decreases; and the desired land is neared. And now the very borders are in view. A few more steps will plant the pilgrim-host in Canaan.

Surely courage will now brace each nerve: joy will beat high in every heart: and with triumphant praise they will plant conquering banners. But is it so? Alas! they pause: they hesitate. Jehovah's ancient covenant fades from their view. The pledged support—the daily help—the experienced favour—are forgotten, as an unsubstantial dream. The unworthy thought creeps in—perchance the nations are too strong for us—their walled cities, and their iron gates may beat back our assault.

Thus they distrust: and tremblingly propose to search the country by spies. They take weak counsel with their carnal

minds. They follow sight—not faith. They cast behind their backs the oath to Abraham—the repeated promise to their fathers—and the rich map of the luxuriant plains, so often drawn by God's describing hand.

Such are the workings of vile unbelief. And that dark monster is not dead. Yet—yet it lives. It lurks in corners of each heart. It ever watches to bring its veil to every eye—its poison-draught to every lip. It is crafty to whisper, that perhaps God's many promises may fail; that faith may be pursuing a vain shadow; and may lie down at last misled—deceived—undone.

Reader, beware—look inward. If you discern the slightest trace of this beguiling serpent, oh! spare it not—seize it and slay it on the altar of revealed truth. Take for the solid pavement of your steps, "It is written." Then manfully advance. Grasp tight the promises; and boldly march toward your pledged inheritance. Let nothing tempt you to try heaven's counsels at the bar of human sense. He is the fool of fools, who tests divine assurances in the scales of mortal vision.

But this timid policy befools Israel's camp. The spies are named. They are sent forth to ascertain, whether their God be true. They pass from place to place. They view the mountains and the vales. Then in their progress they reach Eschol's brook. Here fruit before unknown for size, for beauty, and for luxuriant juice, meets their admiring gaze. They pluck one cluster from the vine. The treasure needs two men to bear it. Upon a staff they prop it up. And thus they seek the camp, laden with a trophy of the country's wealth.

Here let the spies be left. Here let a curtain fall on their sad errand and their sin. Their sin—for they bring back a

false report—and while they show the fruit, they largely dwell upon the walled towns, and monster-forms, and other formidable sights. But from such conduct let us turn. It is more solacing to contemplate that cluster, which they bear—that earnest of rich fields.

The Spirit teaching, we may draw hence an antepast of the full riches of our celestial land. These grapes are proof of Canaan's exuberant fertility. The giant-produce testifies abundance. So, too, there is a heavenly Eshcol before faith's eye. It shows delicious clusters. And should we not delight to walk in the enchanting ground, and cheer our spirits with the glowing prospect? Surely Eshcol's luxuriance pourtrays our glorious Canaan. It pictures heaven—our looked-for rest—the mark, to which we press—the haven of our storm-tossed voyage—the end of weary pilgrimage—the soul's eternal home—the land of every delight. This Eshcol should be ever in our view.

The joy before Christ cheered His heart. The joy before us should gird up our loins. The racer bounds, when he discerns the goal just won. The mariner is alert, when land is seen. The soul spreads swifter wings, when heaven seems to open.

Reader, come, then, in Eshcol's grapes, read faith's amazing prize.

But here thought flags,—mind fails,—all words seem emptiness—all images fall short. No angel's tongue can adequately paint the brightness of those realms. Mortal powers shrink into very nothingness. None can describe, but they who realize. And they, who realize, find their delight an ever-swelling flood—an ever-brightening day—an ever-opening flower—a volume, which eternity cannot read through.

Heaven! It is the palace of the great Eternal. Salvation is its walls—its gates are praise. Its pavement is purity's most golden lustre. Its atmosphere is perfect love. Heaven! It is the home prepared of God before the worlds were made, for His redeemed children. It is the mansion, which the ascended Jesus still labours to make fit. Heaven! It is so fair, that all Jehovah's skill cannot increase the beauty: so full, that nothing can be added: so rich, that it can hold no more.

But Eshcol's luxuriance allures to more close examination. Let us draw nearer. This cluster was the vine's perfection. So, too, perfection is the essence of our heaven. Nothing can enter there to stain—to soil—to vex—to humble. Oh! what a contrast to our present state! We would be holy—but alas! a treacherous adversary rolls us in the mire. Our hearts are daily pierced. We loathe and we abhor ourselves. But our high home is barricaded against sin. Never—never—never—can iniquity again intrude. The soul for ever joys—righteous, as God is righteous—pure, as God is pure. Reader, seek heaven. But heaven is more than this.

Here the foul tempter all day long is spreading nets. There is no saint too saintly for his vile approach. In Eden he approached the innocent. To Jesus he said, Worship me. His whispers, his bold lies, as keenest anguish, haunt the regenerate heart. And while life lasts, there is no respite. He watches every dying bed. But in heaven this misery has ceased. No serpent crawls along that pavement. Satan is without—far off—the bottomless pit has shut its mouth upon him. Reader, seek heaven. But heaven is more than this.

Here fears rush in. The ground is slippery. A precipice is near. We tremble on the brink. Fiery darts fly round.

We shudder, lest some poison penetrate our veins. The torturing thought breaks in, Will my frail bark hold out! Will even God's own grace endure my daily provocations! May I not, after all, fail of salvation! May not my end be with the lost! But fear dies at heaven's gate. The happy company realize, that they are lofty above injury. Their throne is safety in the highest. They know it—what then can they fear? Reader, seek heaven. But heaven is more than this.

Earth is affliction's home. A troop of sorrows compass us about. Tears stream. The bosom sighs. The brow is furrowed by the lines of care. Death tears away the much-loved friend. Sickness invades the frame. The home is desolate. The board is destitute. We look to the right-hand, and there is trouble—on the left, and still fresh troubles frown. But heaven is a wide sea of bliss without a ripple. All tears are wiped away. All faces beam with one enraptured smile. All lips confess, The cup of happiness overflows. We bathe in oceans of delight. Reader, seek heaven. But heaven is more than this.

Here unbelief oft gathers, as a chilly cloud. It mantles the soul in darkness. It suggests apprehension, that His love has ceased, and that desertion is, or may be, our lot. This is a miserable case. When God is felt to be a God at hand, woe ceases to be woe, and burdens are all light. But in heaven a present God is always everywhere. We cannot move beyond the sunshine of His love. His countenance is universal brightness. Reader, seek heaven. But heaven is more than this.

Here ignorance leads us in a floundering path. We thirst for knowledge, but we reach it not. How much concerning God is utterly beyond our grasp! Blindness curtails our

prospect. Clouds narrow our circumference. But heaven is a realm without horizon. We know God, as we are known. We love intelligently. We understand, whom we adore. Reader, seek heaven. But heaven is more than this.

Sin is shut out—temptations banished—fears buried in an unfathomable grave—sorrow and unbelief have fled away—knowledge is perfect—our souls are purity—our bodies are imperishable beauty—we completely share the glory of our all-glorious Lord. How much is this! But yet this is not all.

In the true Eshcol's cluster there is this richer fruit;—Jesus is seen. This is the crown of heaven. This is the pinnacle of bliss. The rising of the sun makes day. The The presence of the king constitutes the court. The revelation of the Lord, without one intervening cloud, is the grand glory of the endless kingdom. Heaven is full heaven, because Christ shines there exactly as He is:—seen and admired of every eye.

Faith searches for Him now in types, and shadows, and prophetic forms, and Sacraments, and holy emblems. This sight is precious—gratefully to be enjoyed—devoutly to be improved. But these are faint outlines of the eternal vision. These often are obscured. But in heaven Christ ever stands conspicuous in one undiminishable blaze.

Believer, what will it be to gaze on the manifested beauty of Him, who is so altogether lovely! What! to read clearly all the deep mysteries of His redeeming will! What! to dive down to the vast depths of His unfathomable heart! What! to fly upward to the very summit of His boundless love! What! to trace clearly all His dealings in providence and grace! What! to comprehend all that Jesus is! What! never to lose sight of Him—no, not for a moment! What! to be ever drinking fresh raptures from His present smile! What!

to feel, that this joy is mine for ever! What! to shout, Come on, ye ages of eternity, you never part me from my Lord! This—this is heaven. This—this is Eshcol's full cluster.

Reader, are you a traveller towards this heaven? When you behold the grapes of Eshcol, do you know, that the vineyard is your sure heritage? The question may be solved. This kingdom is for the subjects of the King—this palace is for His sons. Are you, then, His by faith? They, who are in Him now, will dwell with Him for ever. They, who live Christ on earth, go to Him in the upper world. Then say, Is your soul knit to Him? Are you a branch engrafted in the heavenly stem? Are you the bride espoused to the Lamb. Conscience well knows.

The link, which thus connects, is faith. This is that precious grace, which sees His worth—flees to Him—embraces Him—and holds Him tight. This is that heaven-given power, which, with glad hand, receives the title-deeds of heaven. This is that Spirit-implanted confidence, which looks to Eshcol, and claims all Canaan, as a promised home.

Reader, never rest, then, till, standing on firm Gospel-ground, you can look up and cry, "Lord, I believe." Then daily feed on Eschol's grapes. Then daily move towards Canaan. You soon will hear, "Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundat of the world." Matt. xxv. 34.

THE BUDDED ROD.

"*Behold the rod of Aaron for the house of Levi was budded, and brought forth buds, and bloomed blossoms, and yielded almonds,*" NUMB. xvii. 8.

A NEW miracle now meets us. It is God's work. It is the Spirit's record. Therefore it stands here for our souls' profit. A withered rod, long severed from the parent stem, in which all vital juice was dried, sprouts in fresh verdure. Buds show their infant forms, and clustering blossoms open, while fruit in bright luxuriance hangs.

This fact claims special thought, from its position in the sacred page. It raises a conspicuous head high in a vast field of miracle. Israel's whole journey is a chain of marvels. The falling manna—the guiding cloud—the flowing stream—prove heavenly care. Each day evidences, that omnipotence is active for them. But here a fresh prodigy starts to life. God superadds another sign to win confiding trust.

To us this story of the Budded Rod now comes. May He, who wrought the wonder, work wonders through it for our growth in grace!

But ere we view it with a nearer eye, we must not disregard the preluding notes. The faithless spies draw an appalling picture of the searched land. The fortresses defy assault. The men are giants. Israel's hosts are less than insects at their feet. Such is their evil record. And it is received. Hearts quake. Blaspheming tongues reproach their guiding God.

Thus nature shows its proneness to doubt, to tremble, and to distrust. But such unbelief brings misery in its train. It is a seed, from which ill ever springs. It changes blessings into curse. It arms the hand of love with an avenging scourge.

So now wrath instantly goes forth. The murmuring hosts are doomed to turn their back upon the home just reached. The wilderness must be re-entered. They now must wander up and down for forty years. Thus their bright prospects end in darkest night. Their hopes of rest—almost attained—are gone. They must wear out in woe their dismal days.

Distrust! truly thou art the parent of all woe! My soul, never distrust—cleave fast to God—cast deep your anchor in His word—bear all things—suffer all pains—but never let one rebel doubt arise.

Pause now, and pray, O! Spirit of the living God, never withdraw: leave me not to the fears, which sense and folly would excite. "Lord, I believe; help Thou mine unbelief."

Surely the downcast host will now tread tremblingly their retrogressing path: their lips will now be sad with penitence and shame. They, who so reason, are yet blind to the deep roots of sin. As there is no mercy, which man's heart will not abuse, so there is no judgment, which it will not proudly scorn. Open rebellion soon follows these murmurs and this punishment. Korah and his company dispute the rule of Moses. They challenge it, as usurpation and self-arrogance. Thus God's authority is dethroned. But these leaders are leading at His call. Therefore, to revile them is to revile His will.

Instantly terrific vengeance vindicates God's ways. Moses proclaims the near approach of signal wrath; and when he

ends, "the ground clave asunder that was under them: and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up, and their houses, and all the men, that appertained unto Korah, and all their goods. They and all, that appertained unto them, went down alive into the pit, and the earth closed upon them—and they perished from among the congregation." Numb. xvi. 31—33.

Again we are disposed to cry, surely now rebellion must be buried in that grave! Surely obedience now will meekly walk with God! But we soon find, that sin has seeds so deep, and fibres so far-spreading, that while most withering judgments are descending, it still will germinate and bring forth its weeds.

The morrow dawns, but not to see contrition in each face. Nay, rather, it finds one flood of universal rage. The camp is mad against the servants of the Lord. The whole assembly raises the cry, "Ye have killed the people of the Lord." But sin cannot thus sin, and wrath not multiply to punish. A slaying plague speeds forth. It rapidly mows down the God-defying host. Moses beseeches Aaron to rush forth. He grasps his censer—fills it with incense—adds the altar-fire—and takes his station between the living and the dead. God sees the mediating high-priest—type of His dear Son. The sight checks wrath. But still a plague-struck pile stands, as a mighty pyramid—a monument of sin's deserts.

Now, at this moment, God gives the miracle of the Budded Rod. Another sign now shames unbelieving doubts, and pictures Gospel-truth. The people had scorned Aaron's priestly rights. God's overflowing love selects this very time to add confirmation of His choice. Twelve rods are taken. Each bears the name of a chief ruler of a tribe. They are deposited

before the ark. Thus the night passes. When the morrow comes, Moses re-enters. Eleven lie, as they were placed, withered, lifeless, dry. The twelfth, engraved with Aaron's name, is changed—most marvellously changed! Verdure adorns it—but not verdure only. No branch was ever so enriched. Blossoms are joined to buds. And amid blossoms ripe fruits swell. Man's hand has no share here. The proof of God's immediate power appears in every part. The rod, thus vivified, is to be kept a constant sign. God's voice commands, "Bring Aaron's rod again before the testimony, to be kept for a token against the rebels." Numb. xvii. 10.

Let us now advance from the ancient record to the still-living Gospel of the fact. The Rod in many graphic tints shows Jesus. The very name is caught by raptured prophets. Hark, how they announce Him—"There shall come forth a Rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots." Is. xi. 1. "Behold the man, whose name is The Branch; and He shall grow up out of His place, and He shall build the temple of the Lord: and He shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon His throne: and He shall be a Priest upon His throne." Zech. vi. 12, 13. Thus faith gleans lessons from the very title—Rod.

But the grand purport of the type is to reject all rivals. It sets Aaron alone upon the priestly seat. The parallel proclaims, that similarly Jesus is our only Priest. God calls—anoints—appoints—accepts, and ever hears Him—but Him alone. In His hands only do these functions live. He sprinkles the true mercy-seat with ever-pleading blood. He bears His people's name upon His breast. He perfumes all their petitions—praises—service, with meritorious fragrance. He intercedes, and they are pardoned. He blesses, and all

blessings crown them. But He shares not the glory with a colleague. They, who seek God with censers of their own, like Korah scorn the only avenue—like Korah rush to ruin. My soul, be satisfied with Jesus. Shout—None but the consecrated God-man—He is my total Priest—I need no more.

Next, the constant luxuriance has a clear voice. In nature's field, buds—blossoms—fruit soon wither. The grove—the garden—lovely in spring—laden in autumn—soon droop. Not so this Rod. Its rich abundance was for ever rich. Its verdure was for ever green. Its fruit was ever ripe. Beside the ark it was reserved in never-fading beauty. Here is the ever-blooming Priesthood of our Lord. "Thou art a Priest for ever, after the order of Melchizedek." Ps. cx. 4. "This man—because He continueth ever—hath an unchangeable Priesthood." Heb. vii. 24. What joy—what rapture fills the heart of faith, when with adoring eye it looks aloft and sees its ever-living High Priest on the throne! At every moment Jesus stands in all the freshness of salvation's vigour. Our prayers are ofttimes cold and languid. Our lips are dull to speak. Our thoughts stray far away. Petitions are as an intermitting stream. The channel sometimes is quite dry. It is not so in heaven. There ever is full tide of priestly mediation. Here is the cause why saints prevail, and grace survives. Hence Satan with all his legioned host is beaten back. Hence faith's tiny bark rides on the crest of mountain-waves, and safely reaches the blest haven. Hence plans for Gospel-progress triumph. Because Christ ever lives, and ever loves, and ever prays, and ever works, therefore His kingdom swells.

And so it shall be, while the need remains. But when the last of the redeemed is safely gathered in, then heaven shall no more hear the interceding Priest. Then the one sound

from the vast throng shall be—Hallelujah. Thus the Rod, ever fresh—shows Jesus ever mighty in His Priestly power.

Mark, moreover, that types of Jesus often comprehend the Church. It is so with these rods. The twelve at first seem all alike. They are all sapless twigs. The same grove saw their birth. Man's eye sees but one likeness in their dry forms. But suddenly one puts forth loveliness: while the others still remain worthless and withered. Here is a picture of God's dealings with a sin-slain race. Since Adam's fall, all are born lifeless branches of a withered stock. Many abide so, and thus pass as fuel to the quenchless fire. But in a chosen remnant a new birth occurs. The grave sprouts into life. The sapless puts forth buds. Blossoms appear. Fruit ripens. Whence is the difference? It is not nature's work. No dry stick can restore itself. No withered helplessness can deck itself with verdure. This cannot be. When any child of man arises from the death of sin, and blooms in grace, God has arisen with divine almightiness. Free love decrees renewal. Boundless power achieves it.

Believer, the Budded Rod gives another warning. It is a picture of luxuriance. Turn from it and look inward. Is your soul thus richly fertile? Is life in you abundant life? Where are the almonds? They are rare. Instead of fruit, you often yield the thorn. Should it be so? "Herein is My Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit, so shall ye be My disciples." John xv. 8. Whence is the fault? Why is the stem thus bare? The fertilizing means abound. Perhaps they are little heeded. "Abide in Me and I in you: as the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine, no more can ye, except ye abide in Me." John xv. 4. Perhaps your neglectful soul departs from Christ. Thus fructifying

sap is checked. Thus bloom is nipped. Thus early buds fall off. You leave the sunny slopes of Zion's hill. You stray into the chilly marshes of the world. Then blight and mildew mar the expected fruit. The Word is not the daily food. Hence the roots drink not renovating moisture—and the sere leaf drops off. Meditate in God's law day and night, and you "shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of waters, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season: his leaf also shall not wither: and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper." Ps. i. 3.

But if the Budded Rod rebukes the scanty fruit in the new-born soul, what is its voice to unregenerate worldlings? Alas! these are a forest of sticks, wholly dry. The curse, which fell on Eden's garden, blasted their nature to the core. Thus withered they were born. Thus withered they continue. What will their end be? That end draws near. What then awaits them? Can they be beams and rafters in the palace of heaven's King? Oh! no. The decree is sure. Faithfulness has warned. Almighty power will execute. "That, which beareth thorns and briers, is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing, whose end is to be burned." Heb. vi. 8.

THE RED HEIFER.

"*Speak unto the children of Israel, that they bring thee a Red Heifer without spot: wherein is no blemish: and upon which never came yoke.*" NUMB. xix. 2.

CONTACT with death is the occasion of this type.

Death! The very sound falls heavily. What mind can lightly think of it? What eye unmoved can see it? The limbs, once full of vigour, stir no more. Sinews, once pliant in activity, wax rigid. The form, so wondrous in its mechanism, becomes an inert mass. The features, once the reflecting mirror of ten thousand thoughts, are marble-monotony. The vessel, once so proudly gay, lies a deserted wreck. The fabric, once so sparkling in beauty, is a deserted ruin.

Death! It is more than animation fled. Decay draws near, with a polluting touch. Corruption fastens on its prey. The friends, most dotingly attached, cannot but turn loathingly away. A stern necessity requires, that offensive remains be buried out of sight.

Reader, here pause and meditate. This death is pressing at your heels. It soon will lay you low. Your weeping friends will hide you in the dust. A forgetting world will go on merrily, as though you had not been. Say, do you joyfully await its touch? Can you feel, Death comes as with

friendly hand to open the cage-door, that my freed spirit may flee to its high home? Remember, you cannot escape. This tyrant wields an universal sway.

But in what cradle is it born? Whence is it armed with that destroying scythe? It is transgression's child. Sin is the womb, which bare it. A sinless world would have been deathless bloom. But the world is sinful, and there is an open tomb.

In Eden sin was foreseen, and therefore death was foreannounced. Obey and live: but disobey, and "thou shalt surely die." Gen. ii. 17. The miserable sequel is well known. The tempter came. The bold lie triumphed. And from that day our fallen earth has been one charnel-house.

Hence death is no ingredient in creation's primal law. It is a shadow cast by a blighted ruin. In its features we read wrath—displeasure—curse. Its voice is sternly one—God is offended. Its scourge vindicates eternal majesty and truth.

Death, then, is perpetual evidence, that rebellion has worked sorely. It follows, because sin has preceded. Now God, in love, desires to set this truth conspicuously before each eye. Hence He writes a clear decree in Israel's code. Whosoever touches a dead frame, is unclean seven days. Numb. xix. 11. The man, thus soiled, is outcast from the tabernable-service. He is exiled from social fellowships. The rule is universal. If a friend die within his tent, or if his steps unwittingly approach a corpse exposed in public fields, or if he tread upon the remnant of a lifeless frame, or strike the grave, in which man's ashes sleep, he must be unclean seven days. Numb. xix. 14, 15, 16.

This is a rigid law. But it speaks clearly. How awfully it shows God's sense of sin! Whoever is brought near to

death—sin's symbol—is symbolically vile. Proximity to lifelessness—sin's work—is counted, as proximity to sin itself. The contact with the sign, is branded, as contact with the thing signified

But pollution may thus occur, which no forethought could flee. Without intent the foot might press a grave. In ignorance a tent might be entered, where death sat. The decent offices of love might require, that lifeless relatives be carried out. Care must hide those, who cannot hide themselves. Be it so. It matters not what be the cause: if death be touched, legal uncleanness is incurred.

We hence are taught, how sin surrounds us, and how suddenly it soils. It is the very atmosphere of earth. Man cannot move, but some contamination meets him. His casual walk is along miry paths. In the discharge of pious duties some stain may soon defile. Thus each day's course may render us impure.

This is a humbling truth. But in this very darkness there is light. We are not left bereft of remedy. The unclean may be cleansed. All stains may vanish. There is a fountain opened for all soul-filth. There is full help for foulest need. Where sin abounds, sin's cure exceeds. Where pollution spreads its wide pall, the Saviour brings His wider covering. This is the Gospel-message. And this stands prominently forth in the provision for removing the defilement of death's touch.

Reader, come view now the ordinance of the Red Heifer. And while you view, bless God for the great antitype—Christ Jesus.

God, who sentences the unclean, appears now to relieve. No remedy could be devised by man. None could be credited, unless it bring heaven's seal. Faith cannot rest, but on a

God-erected rock. But He provides, and He reveals. "Speak unto the children of Israel, that they bring thee a Red Heifer without spot: wherein is no blemish: and upon which never came yoke." Numb. xix. 2.

In the first place the victim is defined. But still the people must present it. Thus Christ, God's sacrifice for sin, is taken from earth's sons. That it may be so, He puts on our nature. He clothes Himself with humanity, as the Woman's Seed. So our race is enabled to give from its fold the sin-removing offering. The pitying angels could not find this help. Their nature is distinct from ours. Their glittering hosts hold not a substitute for man. The children of Israel must bring a Red Heifer.

The Heifer's colour is precisely fixed. It must be red throughout, without one spot. Faith learns most precious lessons from this rule. What is Adam, but red earth? Hence, then, the ruddy type manifests our Lord, as Adam's offspring. Yes, He is truly man, that He may take man's place, and bear man's guilt—and pay man's curse—and suffer in man's stead. The Heifer—Red—proclaims, that in nature Christ is verily what Adam was—sin always excepted—and verily what Adam's children are. Believer, rejoice. As man, you sinned—as man, you merit hell: but Christ has lived, and worked, and died, a God-man in your stead.

But Scripture-types have many phases. Pure red recalls the thought of blood. And can faith look to Jesus and not mark His streaming wounds? He stands in vesture dipped in blood. He shed it, and thus satisfies for sin. He shows it by the Spirit to the soul, and thus infuses peace. He pleads it before God, and thus obtains the blessings, which His Cross bought.

"Wherein is no blemish." The Heifer must be perfect. This is a general requisition. Completeness must adorn each victim on God's altar. The slightest blemish was exclusion. This always shows our Jesus—spotless in perfection's brightest lustre. Truly He was man, but truly He was man immeasurably far from sin. From the first breath, till His return in triumph to His throne, He was as clean from evil, as Jehovah in the highest. No sunbeam is more clear from darkness, than Jesus from sin's shade. If it could have been otherwise, how could He have atoned for us? Sin's touch would have made Him amenable to justice. Death would have been due for His own faults. But now He gives His soul—His body—without one blemish, a pure—fit—all-sufficient sacrifice for all the sins of His most sinful flock. Such is the lesson from the Heifer without blemish.

The neck also must be unmarked by yoke. It never may have yielded to compulsion's lash. It must be unused to imposed work. Thus Jesus bounds with willing step to Calvary, "Lo I come." Constraint compelled Him not. No force dragged Him reluctant. His moving impulse was pure love—love for His Father's name—love for immortal souls—love springing fresh from the deep fountains of His heart—love, free as the air.

Christ is all willingness. Who can be tardy, when He calls? Christ flies on rapid wings to save. Who will not fly on rapid wing towards Him?

The Heifer is then dragged without the camp. As a vile thing it is cast out. The dwelling place of man rejects it. The type is answered, when Jesus, reviled—despised—spit on—mangled—scorned, is led beyond the city's gates. Ignominy's cup then overflows. He is reproached, as vilest refuse

Believer, count not on favour with the world. They, who scorned Jesus, will not honour you. Submit with His most lamb-like patience. Follow Him amid all sneers. Endure the cross. It raises to a crown.

Next it is slain. And did not Jesus die? He did, for death was our desert. Therefore He drank that cup. What grace! what love! what glorious rescue! what complete redemption! what full atonement! In very deed the God-man dies. Believer, clasp the truth—exult—adore. When sins reproach—when conscience stings—when Satan rages—when the white throne is set, shout, Christ died. This answers every charge—silences each adversary's voice—breaks Satan's chains—quenches hell's flames—tears out the worm's sting—annihilates destruction—brings in salvation. The truth, that Jesus died, is glory to God—glory for man—glory for ever.

The Priest then turns towards the Mercy-seat, and seven times sprinkles the blood. The Gospel-story is replete with blood. We here again are taught its triumphs. It opens the door to the pure sanctuary above. It clears the way. None enter, but along this consecrated path. This sprinkling is the only key.

Fire is then applied, and the whole Heifer is consumed. The unsparing element devours all, and soon reduces it to ashes. We see in this, how vengeance deals relentlessly with our sin-laden Surety. It only checks its hand, when no more can be taken. Sweet are the tidings, that no wrath remains for those, who die in Christ. Their agony is past—their punishment is paid—all now before them is eternity of love.

Finally, the ashes are collected. Mingled with water from a running stream, they form a purifying store. This is laid up for those polluted by the touch of death. Through seven

days such must be counted, as unclean. Upon the third and seventh, they are sprinkled by a hyssop-rod dipped in this fluid. And then impurity departs. Then the excluding taint is cleansed away.

Thus ends the rite. But Gospel truth still lives in the eternal record. A fundamental truth is prominent. As these ashes purify the ceremonially impure: so virtue from the dying cross takes moral guilt away.

But we learn more. The ashes are not used alone. They are commingled with pure water. This sparkling produce of the spring portrays the Spirit's grace. Hence, though Christ's death obliterates condemnatory stains, the Spirit must come in with further aid, to wash the heart, and meeten it for heavenly home. This hallowed fluid is applied by a hyssop-bunch. This rod is emblem of the faith, which ventures near, and claims the merit of redemption's store, and then applies it to the soul. Ashes unsprinkled availed not. The Gospel-hope ungrasped is nothing worth. Faith's hand must clasp and use it.

Reader, is there not here most large instruction for your soul? Each day sees you unclean. Say, is your faith each day most closely dealing with the Saviour's death, and with the Spirit's love? In the Red Heifer you are taught the remedy prepared by God. He hates, indeed, the filth of sin. But He provides—proclaims—extends full expiation. All is now ready to make you whiter than the whitest snow. Come, then, draw near in faith. Be clean—be sanctified—be saved.

THE BRAZEN SERPENT.

"*The Lord said unto Moses, Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole; and it shall come to pass that every one, that is bitten, when he looketh upon it shall live.*" NUMB. xxi. 8.

ALAS! what broods of vileness nestle in man's heart! As wave succeeds to wave, sin presses on the heels of sin. If a brief calm seems to give peace, a fiercer storm soon rises. The seeds of evil, for a while concealed, revive as weeds in spring. All human history proves this. But the recurring murmurs in the wilderness are saddest evidence. Seven times already has rebellion raged. And now again, because the way is long, there is revolt, and blasphemies are muttered. "The people spake against God, and against Moses, Wherefore have ye brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? for there is no bread, neither is there any water: and our soul loatheth this light bread." Numb. xxi. 5.

Here is another proof, that there is no blindness like unbelief. Surely the sweetest manna fell with every morning's dawn. Surely the purest stream flowed closely in the rear. But hard ingratitude sees frowns on mercy's lovliest brow.

Reader, are not your features in this picture? By nature this same quarry is your cradle. You spring, a branch of this sin-bearing tree. And if fretful distrust be not your constant fruit, free grace has wrought in you a mighty change.

Israel's murmurs soon plunge them into deep waters of distress. Hence learn to dread this evil. Flee its touch. Bar fast the door against its entrance. Wrath follows in its rear.

The dregs of woe are in its cup. Whoever sinned and suffered not? See what swift vengeance overtakes these rebels! "The Lord sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people: and much people of Israel died." Numb. xxi. 6.

The camp is now wide-spread dismay. These messengers of wrath beset each path. No care can flee them. Their dart is sudden. Their sting is death. Thus multitudes sink tortured to the grave.

But Israel's sin gives opportunity for grace to smile. Mercy oft uses punishment, as a cure. A scourge is sent to check the downward course. How many find recovery in suffering's vale! How many rise, because they were cast down! A rod is often evidence of love. It is so here. The stricken crowds now feel their guilt. Self-loathingly they mourn. They beseech Moses, "Pray unto the Lord, that He take away the serpents from us."

Moses complies. He here appears a type of his forgiving—mediating—Lord. He gives no railing for their cruel taunts. He upbraids them not for unbelief. He reminds them not, that this misery was the due wages of their ways. He quickly flies to God.

Can prayer knock earnestly at heaven's gate and be unheeded? Eternal truth proclaims, "Ask, and ye shall have." Christian experience responds, "This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles." Ps. xxxiv. 6. Rejoicing multitudes have proved—are proving—that faithful petition prospers. Its gains are ever sure and large. When supplication wrestles, plenteous showers of grace are on the wing.

But it is mercy's wont to give more than our hearts expect. Behold a proof. The people seek a respite from the plague.

This would, indeed, have been a gracious boon. But it would have left the bitten to expire. It would, indeed, have checked the flowing tide of fiery ill. But it would not have eased the pain-racked limb. And what is more, it would have reared no Gospel-beacon for all ages of the Church. But the reply exceeds requests. It thus is worthy of a giving God. It is an ocean of vast love. It is a volume of deep wisdom. It is a flower redolent of saving truth. God takes occasion from this sin to cheer souls to the end of time. "The Lord said unto Moses, make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole: and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live." Numb. xxi. 8.

Relief for body is conceded. But, so marvellous is the plan, that human skill is silent in amaze. No mind could have conceived such mode. Indeed, proud reason would assuredly despise it. But cure for body is the smallest portion of this mercy. It shows the cross, in form too clear for doubts—in colours, which no age can fade.

It is instructive to observe, how Moses staggers not here in unbelief. God speaks. That is enough. Therefore the plan is wise: therefore it must succeed. So, instantly he executes. "He made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole: and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived." Numb. xxi. 9.

Behold God's method: simple, yet mighty; one, yet sufficient for each case. The prince, the poor, must seek the self-same remedy. The mightiest intellect—the most expanded mind—the most inventive thought—could find no other rescue. The most illiterate had instant access to it. The aged raised the eye, and health returned. The youthful gazed, and malady was gone. In some, the pains were great, and death seemed

near, but one view killed the plague. Others just felt the sting, and found the pain to fly. Some were far off in distant borders of the camp: some had their dwellings round the uplifted pole: but every look—from far—from near—was full, complete, and instantaneous cure.

Did any scorn the means? If so, neglect was ruin. No other help could heal the bite. But all, who acted trust in God's appointed mode, found sure deliverance. There was recovery—free—open unto all—but only one. Look, and be healed. Look, and let life return.

The glory of this type now gloriously breaks. Let minor thoughts now vanish, as stars before the sun. The Brazen Serpent on the pole is Christ. The look towards it is faith. This must be granted. The lips, which cannot err—which cannot lead astray—decide. When Jesus opened wisdom's volume to Nicodemus, He brought him to this very scene. The words are bright, as midday. "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so the Son of Man must be lifted up; that whosoever believeth in Him, should not perish, but have eternal life." John iii. 14, 15.

Blessed record! sweet sound! amazing truth! grand tidings worth ten thousand worlds! Here then, in emblem, is the Gospel of free grace. Here is the remedy of God. Here is relief commensurate with all the need of all poor sin-sick souls. Reader, give ear. See in this figure your hope—your joy—your peace—your full redemption—your complete salvation—your curse removed—your sins all blotted out. Come, and look inward—realize your smart—your pain—your rankling sore—your just exposure to eternal death. And then look upward and behold health in a bleeding Saviour's wounds—life in a dying Saviour's death.

Mark, perishing is no fable's vain conceit. These words warn of it, "that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish." The bitten sufferer truly pictures our very case. We too are pilgrims through a wild wilderness. It is infested with the old serpent and his brood. At every step, at every turn, we meet some forked attack. Each day the mischief taints our veins. Satan's least touch is fatal venom. In Eden he began his murderous work. And still his fiery darts fly round. No mother's son escapes. All earth is perishing like Israel's camp. But earth brings no relief. If penitence for ever wept: if sighs ceased not: if rolling hours were one continued wail: the streaming eye—the smitten breast—the bending knee—the upraised eye—the wringing hand—the supplicating lip could not extract the sting. Self has no help. The law is no physician. Its glance detects disease. Its voice proclaims the hopeless state. But it holds no cordial in its stores. It denounces the leprous spots. It sternly sentences, and leaves the wounded to expire. Man cannot help himself: or save his brother. No rites—no forms—no services—suck out the poison. As all the sick in Israel's camp were surely lost, unless God had decreed to heal: so all the serpent-wounded upon earth must surely have sunk down to hell, unless free mercy had most freely pitied. But He who said, Raise up a serpent on the pole, said also, Lift up My Son upon the accursed tree.

Thus God resolves to help the helpless—to stay the plague—to save the lost. Praise—praise—His name. Our God is love. Gaze on the proof. He calls His Son to bring relief. Bless—bless His grace. He sends His Jesus from His own bosom to give health.

And can it be, that Jesus draws not back? Nay, He flies

gladly on redeeming wings. He thinks no load too heavy—no agony too great—no ignominy too vile—no shame too shameful, if only He may restore.

My soul, ponder again this healing work. The serpent's sting had slain man's race. The God-man comes to bruise this serpent's head. He, without sin, assumes the form of sinful flesh: and in that form is lifted high upon the cross. He hangs the graphic antitype of the brass-serpent. He is thus raised, that He may be conspicuously displayed to all earth's sons: and that all faithful ministers may learn to lift aloft this only beacon.

Reader, look then from other things towards this cross. Look with assured faith. He, who there hangs, is verily the mighty God. Therefore divinity belongs to those deep wounds. They have infinity of merit to expiate infinity of guilt. He wears your form—He bears your nature—that His sufferings may be accounted, as your own. In Him all power—all meetness—all sufficiency combine. God sends—accredits—appoints—accepts Him. In Him all attributes are more than satisfied. He is salvation to the uttermost. He is God's glory in the highest.

Look yet more earnestly. The look of faith is saving. You cannot turn a trustful eye to Him and not receive fullest salvation. Did any wounded Israelite look and not live? So no beholding sinner dies. The remedy is sure—is near. You may be aged, and long years of sin may show a blackened course. Look, and the mighty mass is gone. You may bewail a life of aggravated guilt. Your stains may be the deepest crimson. You may be plunged and replunged in vilest filth. Look, and be whole. If all the sins of all the lost were yours, they would not exceed this expiating power. You may be

young—and life's first buds be opening. But you are born a withered branch on withered tree. The serpent's poison tainted your infant veins. You never can have health, but from the cross. The rich must look—for riches cannot save. The poor must look—for poverty is no cloak for guilt. The learned must look—for learning can devise no other help. The ignorant must look—for ignorance is not heaven's key. None ever lived without soul-sickness. None regain strength apart from Christ. But His cross stands uplifted high—even as the pole in Israel's camp. And it is not a vain voice, which cries, "Look unto Me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth." Is. xlv. 22.

Believer, you know, that you have daily need to look. You are raised high by faith, but not above the flying serpent's reach. Alas! how suddenly he wounds God's saints. And all his wounds bring pain. But the reviving cross is ever in sight. There only can the venom lose its pain. Then live with your eye riveted on Christ. Thence flow your streams of peace. Turn not away your gaze in life—in death—until you enter the blessed home, where the old serpent cannot come.

JACOB'S STAR AND ISRAEL'S SCEPTRE.

"*There shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel.*" NUMB. xxiv. 17.

JESUS is here sweetly preached: but from a heart, which never loved Him, and by lips, which never more shall praise Him. It is indeed an awful personage, who now speaks. A cloak of fearful mystery enwraps him. He journeys far to curse God's people. But when he comes, he cannot choose but bless.

His name is Balaam. His mind, his motives, and his frightful course, are a deep study. They are a sign-post, showing hell's downward road. Thus they present a vast expanse of profit, of which the barest outline only can be touched.

His dwelling was amid the mountains of the East. His intellect had there acquired some knowledge of the living God. His name was wide-spread, as a man enriched with heavenly gifts. He was revered, as having mystic influence in the unseen world.

Hence, Balak, Moab's king, dismayed at Israel's conquering course, thinks, that his aid would avail more than armaments. Therefore he calls him, saying, "I wot, that he, whom thou blessest, is blessed: and he, whom thou cursest, is cursed."

Common repute thus made him more than man. But all his outward sanctity concealed a graceless heart. Disguised in holy livery, he was the slave of this world's prince.

The messengers arrive. Their errand is declared. Balaam's first answer suits his fame. God seems the foremost object of his thoughts. He thus professes, that God's will is his only guide: "Lodge here this night, and I will bring you word again, as the Lord shall speak unto me." And can so fair a morn be soon a rayless night? Alas! a good commencement secures not a good end. The bud may never blossom, and the blossom may not ripen into fruit. Many a lost one once looked heavenward.

He tells the matter to his God. The clearest answer is returned. "Thou shalt not go with them: thou shalt not curse the people: for they are blessed." And can it be, that God thus communes with unrighteous men? Yes. Truth may pass the threshold of the mind, and not subdue the heart. Alpine snows reflect the sun, but are not softened by it.

Balaam's half-heartedness now creeps from its disguise. His ear received God's plain reply. But his eye looked on Balak's rich rewards. He cannot but dismiss the princes. But his weak words betray his hankering heart. He slightly says, "The Lord refuseth to give me leave to go." Here is not truth in its full stature. The prohibition is withheld: "Thou shalt not curse." The grand decree is cloaked: "For they are blessed."

Unhappy man! one honest speech would have uplifted him above temptation's reach. Alas! for those who halt and linger on the borders of untruth. The timid clippers of God's word, the trembling fritterers, suppress reality, and so deceive.

Satan has cast a wily net. His arts succeed. Balaam told less than God's reply. The princes hasten back, and they tell even less than Balaam's words. Dilution is diluted more.

They only say, "Balaam refuseth to come." God is now totally left out: and man's demurring will appears the sole hindrance.

The temptation is thus courted to return. And it will not be slow to seek the half-inviting door. Balak sends mightier princes, with larger entreaties, and more costly bribes. Balaam's mask now further drops. He frowns them not away. Professing loyalty to God, he urges them to tarry, while he sought further guidance. But he fully knew God's will. Still, regardless of this, a secret longing lurked, that he might get some doubtful word, which seemingly might make compliance guiltless. Alas! for those, who, while they scruple to impinge against a bolted door, seek by some crevice to get out.

God speaks again; but the restraining rein is slackened. They, who shun light, will soon be left to stumble in the dark. Balaam now only hears, "If the men come to call thee, rise up, and go with them." Here is a lowered barrier. And, intent on gain, he quickly overleaps it. Uncalled, he early rises. And so he rushes down the stream to earthly treasure, and soul-death.

But now a prodigy bars up his course. The Angel of the Lord thrice stands an adversary in the way; and then "the dumb ass, speaking with man's voice, forbad the madness of the prophet." 2 Peter ii. 16. Heaven and earth miraculously check. Still his desire of lucre will not stop. He is surrendered to his evil will. Restraints diminish. He gains the terrible permission to advance. "Go with the men." He deserts God. God deserts him. Thus Balaam reaches Moab's land. And here he still pretends devotedness to God, while his whole heart worships the idol of base pelf.

What scenes ensue? Altars are raised. Victims profusely

bleed. The king beseeches, tempts, caresses. The wretched prophet struggles to comply. He seeks all means to curse, that so he may grasp the cursed bribe. He mounts the summit of the lofty rock. He thence surveys the outstretched camp. He opens his mouth—and longs for words to blast God's people, and secure the gold. But all is vain. As a reluctant instrument in mightier hands he cries, "How shall I curse, whom God hath not cursed?"

Surely he will now desist. Ah! no. A hateful passion has become his lord. Another vile attempt is made. He moves to Pisgah's heights. Thence but the outskirts of the camp are seen, and there he tarries, courting a seeming license to oppose God without open rejection of a servant's garb. The Lord again distinctly overrules. The struggling traitor cannot but cry, "Behold, I have received commandment to bless: and He hath blessed: and I cannot reverse it." Will he not yield to this clear voice! Will he not turn, and rather heap his curses on God's foes!

Ah! what can change the heart, which worldly passions hold in bonds? Once more he seeks an eminence. He fully looks upon the multitudinous array. Again his bad lips open. Again God conquers, and the truth is heard, "Blessed is he, that blesseth thee, and cursed is he, that curseth thee."

Do any read, who, against conscience and clear light, would touch forbidden ground? Balaam's case cries, Forbear—forbear. Be firm—be resolute—at once, for ever turn away. Dally not with an unholy wish. Now to escape may not be hard. To-morrow, resistance weakens, while the lure strengthens.

The prophet vexed—the king enraged, now part. Balak reproaches—Balaam recriminates. They both are foiled. The

evil union ends in evil. But Balaam's lips speak once again. Unhappy man! he must proclaim a Saviour, in whose salvation he shall have no share.

"I shall see Him, but not now: I shall behold Him, but not nigh: there shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel, and shall smite the corners of Moab, and destroy all the children of Sheth." Numb. xxiv. 17.

Thus is the Gospel preached by a dead soul. Let preachers search their inmost hearts. Christ only in the mind—the lips—the pulpit, will not save. Many, many show, who never shall behold Him. They raise the cross, and turn away. They praise the blood, and never wash. They tell of wounds, which they touch not. They open out redemption's scheme, but never clasp redemption's Lord. They teach the truth, and live a lie. They point out the source of life, and pass by it to death. The apostle Judas from the side of Jesus went to his own place. The prophet Balaam thus preached, and yet he died the vilest of the vile.

But his clear prophecy now asks attention. Where can more glowing terms of Christ be found? A Star—a Sceptre—a two-fold phase of the most glorious sight, which men or angels can behold.

"There shall come a Star out of Jacob," A Star, what is it, but a glittering orb set in the canopy of night? It sparkles, as a gem amid surrounding gloom. It darts a cheering ray on the black pall around. It smiles with lovely radiance on a dark ground.

Such is Christ Jesus. Where He beams not, it is unmitigated night. It is the firmament without a star. What is such blackness, but a chilly type of ignorance, and wretchedness, and sin? Take the poor soul, in which Christ never

shone. All these vile troops there brood. Is God there known? Far otherwise. There may be vague idea of some supreme director. But the realities of grace, and love, and truth, and justice, are utterly unseen. There is no basking in a Father's smile. Each step is through the maze and thickness of impenetrable doubts. There is no joy of a felt pardon. There is no knowledge of sins blotted out. Such is each Christless soul. But let the Star appear: what loveliness pervades the scene! So when Christ rises in heart, that brightness comes, before which sin and misery flee.

Balaam proclaimed this Star. But his beclouded eye discerned it not. Reader, say, do you see its beauteous light? All, who behold it, reflect its rays.

Next Jesus, who thus enlightens, exercises sway. His presence cheers and also subjugates. Another aspect therefore is adjoined. "A Sceptre shall rise out of Israel." These types of Christ may seem most diverse. But they have mystic union. Is not a Saviour seen most surely loved? Is not a Saviour loved most warmly served? As surely as we cannot love, until we know; so surely we cannot know and fail to love: so surely we cannot love and not desire to please. Thus the Gospel-beams always give sanctifying warmth. Thus the Star brings a Sceptre with it. Experience proves this truth. The holiest man is always he, whose soul is the widest flood of Gospel-light. The more the Star is seen, the more the Sceptre is outstretched. The more Christ shines within, the more ungodly weeds decline. The Gospel-truth makes all its subjects willing in a day of power. And when made willing, they no longer live to self, but unto Him, who governs by His love. Balaam proclaimed the Sceptre with a rebel-heart. Reader, submit to this most righteous rule.

Mark finally, that Balaam is forced to utter terror to a Christ-refusing world. The Sceptre "shall smite the corners of Moab, and destroy all the children of Sheth." As His willing subjects are exalted, so the rebellious world must perish. They, who submit are saved. They who resist, are dashed to powder.

Reader, now answer, what is your state? Are you among the happy heirs of this Star's kingdom? If not, take warning. His coming is at hand. His glorious car draws near. A blessed concourse throngs it. They sing. They triumph. They give praise. The rebel mass lie prostrate at His feet. The crushing wheels destroy them, and from His presence they are driven to that woe, where no Star rises in the endless night: and the one Sceptre is hell's iron sway.

Think, think again of Balaam. He had an inward hell, while yet he lived on earth. Where is there misery like this foresight of woe? "I shall see Him, but not now. I shall behold Him, but not nigh." His eyes shall see the Lord—too late. Yes. They must open to His glorious view. "But not nigh!" What, when He calls His ransomed to His side, and bids them occupy His throne, and gaze for ever on His beauty, and never leave Him more—what, then to be cast out! Reader, beware. Soon will each doom be fixed.

PHINEHAS.

"*The Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Phinehas, the son of Eleazer, the son of Aaron the priest, hath turned my wrath away from the children of Israel, while he was zealous for my sake among them, that I consumed not the children of Israel in my jealousy. Wherefore say, Behold I give unto him My covenant of peace: and he shall have it and his seed after him, even the covenant of an everlasting priesthood: because he was zealous for his God, and made an atonement for the children of Israel.*" NUMB. XXV. 10—13.

PHINEHAS appears, as a rainbow on the bosom of a storm. He is as a flower on a wild heath—a fertile spot in a parched desert—pure ore in a rude quarry—a fragrant rose upon a thorny hedge—faithful among faithless.

The wretched Balaam, held in from cursing, returns not sorrowing to his distant home. He is restrained, but not reformed. Deep seeds of evil often live, though not permitted to break forth. So it is in him. He lingers still in Moab's godless land. Though often foiled, venom still works within. It seeks an outlet in secret and abominable plots. He counsels Balak to spread lustful lures, and to entice the people to the idol-feast. Let arms be now laid down—banquets prepared—and blandishments displayed. Rev. ii. 14.

Ah! what destruction may one bad man cause! One spark may kindle desolating flames. One evil thought may be the seed of many a poison-tree.

Balak adopts the evil plan. The fascinating net is spread.

The people rush in crowds, like fluttering moths to a destroying flame. And thus they fall self-slain. A bosom-traitor yields the fort.

Reader, the greatest danger is from self. Bar fast the breast. Chain your own thoughts. Satan's onward malignity may fall innocuous, like Balaam's stifled curse. But, if the heart gives up the door, lusts in vile troops will enter, and do murderous work. How many die—the slaughtered of a yielding will!

While thus the people sin, God's vengeance rises with a giant-arm. Sentence of death is passed upon the guilty. The judges raise the gallows. The offenders perish ignominiously. And, as if executions were too tardy, a pestilence moreover comes, and sweeps its thousands into penal graves.

This is a moment of terrific awe. All sights and sounds of death appear. The frightful scene seems as a picture of the last-day wrath.

Surely now the stoutest heart will quake! Surely one cry for mercy will wail tremblingly in every tent! It is not so. Judgments, apart from grace, may harden. The bit may only chafe ungovernable steeds. Thus this appalling moment witnesses the outbreak of increasing sin. Zimri, a prince of loftiest rank, whose station made him the observed of all, dares wrath—sneers at the legal sentence—braves the plague's withering stroke—raises his rebel hand against all decency and fear, and openly, in plainest vision of the weeping crowds, stalks boldly into sin's embrace. Amid the annals of iniquity, madder contempt of God cannot be found. Sin has sinned vilely, but this is among its most unblushing acts.

Phinehas, the priest, beholds. And zeal for God swells through his soul. He cannot stay the impulse to wipe out the stain. His arm must hasten the just punishment. Thus,

with his javelin, he indignantly sweeps hence the titled culprit, and the high-born partner in filth.

So Phinehas felt; and so he acted. What is the result? The Lord gives respite. The plague is stayed. And an approving voice honours the righteous zeal. "Behold I give unto him My covenant of peace: and he shall have it and his seed after him—even the covenant of an everlasting priesthood."

Reader, now pause, and mark the mighty principle, which rolled like a torrent in the heart of Phinehas. The Spirit leaves it not obscure. The praise is this, "He was zealous for his God." He could not fold his arms and see God's law insulted—His rule defied—His will despised—His majesty and empire scorned. The servant's heart blazed in one blaze of godly indignation. He must be up to vindicate his Lord. His fervent love—his bold resolve—fear nothing in a righteous cause. The offending Zimri was a potent prince: nevertheless he spared him not.

Believer, can you read this and feel no shame? Do your bold efforts testify your zeal? Sinners blaspheme God's name. Do you rebuke? His Sabbaths are profaned. Do you protest? False principles are current. Do you expose the counterfeits? Vice stalks in virtue's garb. Do you tear down the mask? Satan enthrals the world. Do you resist? Nay, rather are you not dozing unconcerned? Whether Christ's cause succeeds, or be cast down, you little care. If righteous zeal girded your loins, and braced your nerves, and moved the rudder of your heart, and swelled your sails of action, would God be so unknown, and blasphemy so daring?

Mark, next, the zeal of Phinehas is sound-minded. It is not as a courser without rein—a torrent unembanked—a hur-

ricane let loose. Its steps are set in order's path. It executes God's own will in God's own way. The mandate says, let the offenders die. He aims a death-blow, then, with obedient hand. The zeal, which heaven kindles, is always a submissive grace.

This zeal wrought wonders. It seemed to open heaven's gates for blessings to rush forth. God testifies, "He hath turned my wrath away from the children of Israel." He hath made atonement for them. My name is rescued from dishonour. The haughty sinner is laid low. Therefore I can restrain my vengeance. Men see, that sin is not unpunished: mercy may now fly righteously to heal.

Zeal is indeed a wonder-working grace. It scales the heavens in agonizing prayer. It wrestles with omnipotence, and takes not a denial. Who can conceive what countries, districts, cities, families, and men have sprung to life, because zeal prayed? It also lives in energetic toil. It is the moving spring in hearts of apostles, martyrs, reformers, missionaries, and burning preachers of the Word. What hindrances it overleaps! What chains it breaks! What land it traverses! It girdles earth with efforts for the truth: and pyramids of saved souls are trophies to its praise. My soul, bestir your every power for Christ. The labour will not be in vain.

Next mark, how heavenly smiles beam on the zeal of Phinehas. Honour decks those, who honour God. The priesthood shall be his. It shall live in his line from age to age. He and his sons shall bear the name of Israel on their breast, and make atonement in the sanctuary. Grand privilege! Such is the fruit of zeal.

Brave works for God win crowns. There is no merit in them. But the grace, which gives the will, and nerves the

arm, and brings success, awards a recompense. Among earth's happiest sons, and heaven's most shining saints, devoted labourers hold foremost place.

This lesson ends not here. Phinehas for ever stands a noble type. He reflects faith's grand object—salvation's precious column—Christ Jesus. Yes. Christ is here. In Phinehas, we see Christ's heart, and zeal, and work, and mightily constraining impulse. In Phinehas we see Christ crowned, too, with the priesthood's glory.

Let thought here pause and commune with salvation's story. What brought Christ from the highest heavens? What led Him, firm amid reproach—unchecked by hindrances—along earth's wretched paths? What nailed Him, a curse, to the accursed tree? They answer well, who say,—His love for souls—His burning eagerness to snatch them from hell's flames. But the reply falls short.

True! tender mercy throbbed in His every pulse. But there were mightier motives urging Him with mightier force. The deepest depth was zeal for God. His strongest impulse was to bring glory to His Father's name. Hear his own words, "Lo! I come. I delight to do Thy will, O my God."

Come, now, view in this light redemption's work. Behold the law—dazzling in purity—wide as infinity in its demands—incapable of change. If it be set aside, God's honour suffers loss. If its decrees are thoroughly fulfilled, God's honour is maintained. Jesus places Himself, as man, beneath its yoke. It asks for nothing, which He gives not. He lives a life of pure compliance. What it exacts, He yields. Can God be honoured more? The covenant of grace permits Him to impute this obedience to the ransomed seed: and thus heaven's courts are filled with crowds, in whom no flaw, no speck, no

blemish, can be found. All pass those thresholds robed in sinless obedience. Thus Christ exalts God's law. He put on a panoply of zeal, and wrought this magnifying work.

This zeal, too, led Him to the accursed tree. All, whom He saves, are by nature and by act deeply plunged in guilt. Each sin is linked to the unalterable curse. If it descend not, where is God's truth? But Jesus meets it in man's form. Each viol of pledged wrath is outpoured on Him. No sin of His vast family escapes the scourge. Tremendous threats are ratified tremendously. Christ's zeal for God takes the full cup, and drinks it to the dregs. What follows? Justice is just: truth remains true: holiness appears most holy: and righteousness most righteous: while grace exults, and mercy sings, and souls are saved, and every attribute is honoured.

See then, that God's glory is the brightest jewel in redemption's diadem. The Gospel is Jehovah glorified. If all sin's race had passed to endless woe, justice and truth would have sat sternly on an iron throne—compelling dues—but never satisfied: while loving-kindness would have pined powerless to help. But Jesu's zeal crowns all with glory. Reader, study the Gospel. It is a god-like scheme.

But Phinehas received reward for zeal—even the covenant of everlasting priesthood. So Jesus passed through a low valley to a glorious height. "Being found in fashion, as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name, which is above every name." Phil. ii. 8, 9. "I have glorified Thee on the earth," is the strong plea. "And now, O Father, glorify Thou me, with Thine own self, with the glory which I had with Thee, before the world was," is the vast prayer. John xvii. 5. The plea was

mighty, and the prayer was heard. Jesus has turned away eternal wrath. He has brought in eternal reconciliation. Therefore He sits a Priest upon His throne. "All power is given unto Him in heaven and in earth." He sways the sceptre of all rule. Thus He consummates redemption's scheme. He takes away the heart of unbelief. He implants love. He ingraffs faith. He sows the seeds of righteousness. He waters the tender plants of grace. He matures the precious fruit. He intercedes a conquering Advocate. He perfumes with sweet incense the cry and work of faith. So He, who once laid down His life in zeal, now reigns an all prevailing Priest.

Believer, such is your Lord. Such was His zeal. Such is His glory. Be then conformed to Him. Let the same mind be the one flame in you. Work for Him—with Him. "It is a faithful saying, For if we be dead with Him, we shall also live with Him. If we suffer, we shall also reign with Him."

REFUGE

"*Among the cities, which ye shall give unto the Levites, there shall be six cities for Refuge.*" NUMB. XXXV. 6.

REFUGE is a thought dear to every Christian heart. It is, as haven to the ship, when clouds blacken: as dove-cot to the bird, when hawks pursue. When once the wrath of God is seen in its true light: when once the conscience has turned pale in terror: when once hell's gulf is opened at the feet: when once the quenchless flames have glared in prospect, despair must seize its prey, unless some Refuge be discerned. But Christ a sure Refuge stands, high as the heavens, wide as infinity, lasting as the endless day.

An emblem now is given—seal of this Gospel-fact. Some types of Christ appeared for a brief season, and then vanished. The guiding cloud, the manna, and the flowing stream ended on Jordan's banks. But here is a sign, which lived through Canaan's history. It never failed, until the cross was reared.

The story of the ordinance is brief. The case was possible, that man, without intent—without one evil or revengeful thought, might stain his hands in human blood. An unaimed blow might fall. An undirected arrow might wound fatally. There might be murder unawares.

When such event took place, a kinsman was permitted to arise in wrath, and claim the slayer's life. The law gave

license to take blood for blood. He, who had slain, was open to be slain.

Reader, conceive the hapless injurer's state. Peace—happiness—security, were fled for ever. Each sight would startle. Each rustling sound would bring alarm. The crowd was peril, for there the kinsman might unsheath his sword. In deep retirement, some ambush might be laid. Thus every spot and every hour would threaten death to the poor trembler's mind. His life was one continual terror.

But Israel's God ordains a means to rescue from such live-long woe. He bids, that several cities should be set apart. In number they are six. They are distributed throughout the land. Thus no place is very distant from these walls. They stand on lofty hills, conspicuous from afar. They are to be sanctuaries. The manslayer, reaching their Refuge, was at once secure. The angry kinsman might not enter. The townsmen might not close their gates, by day nor night—nor cast the fleeing stranger out. Here then security enclosed him in its arms. Here he might turn and boldly face his enemy. He had the felt reality of full escape. He knew, that every danger was left far behind, and that his days might now glide sweetly without one shadow of alarm. But he must closely keep within the covering walls. Without there still was danger. If he but stepped beyond the bounds, his life was open to the kinsman's blow.

He must abide thus sheltered, while the high-priest lived. That death dissolved avenging claims: and then the slayer was at large. Instantly he might go forth: and unmolested move from place to place.

It is recorded, that all care was taken to help the slayer in his flight. Wide roads were formed, and kept in strict repair

All hindrances were smoothed. And at each turn, where doubt might rise, posts were erected, which on their pointing arms proclaimed, "Refuge, Refuge."

Such is the type. Spirit of love, arise to teach! Send forth Thy Christ-revealing light! Grant, that some soul may hence discern the truth of Gospel-Refuge.

Poor sinner, this type at once displays your case. The slayer is your counterpart. Perhaps, startled, you cry, What, are my hands blood-stained? In answer take this truth. There may be murder, though no man be slain. There may be carnage of duties—talents—time—souls. And alas! there is. No day, no hour, passes in which this guilt is not incurred. Earth seems a battle-field, in which we level blows at God's just claims. It is a charnel-house piled with the skeletons of slaughtered means of grace. Our words and looks are often arrows barbed with deathful poison. Who treads not upon slain opportunities of good? There may not always be pre-meditation in the sin. But as the man-slayer did not plot his deed, so sinners blindly commit these murders through ignorance and unwatched thought.

Take now the sinner awakened to the sense of this guilt. He is as the slayer rushing in terror from the kinsman's wrath. He knows himself to be pursued. Vengeance is pressing at his very heels. An arm is raised to fell him to the ground. The furious sword is glittering near. The bow is bent. The arrow is poised upon the string. Another moment, and the fatal wound is given. His mind is agony. Each fibre quivers. Tremblings beset him. Ye conscience-stricken, say, is not this your terrified condition?

One kinsman only hunted the slayer. But many adversaries threaten the guilt-stained soul. Mark the long troop.

See, how it rushes on. God's justice takes the lead. It has strong claims. Its wrongs are many. It has clear right to execute revenge. And it is swift, as God is swift—and strong, as God is strong—and terrible, as God is terrible. Can man escape? Ah! sinner, tremble. This foe is near. Its wrath is righteous. Its aim is sure. If you are caught in nature's plain, you surely die. If you are clad in nature's armour, you have no safeguard. You must perish.

The law is in pursuit, winged with all vengeance. It demands pure unblemished love from the cradle to the grave—from first to latest breath—in every child of man, whatever be his station—talent—rank. Exception cannot be. All, who transgress, become its prey. And who transgresses not? Where is the thought, in which love reigns supreme? Where is the moment free from blame? This law must have its dues. It follows sternly. It can never spare. Its curse rolls onward, as a swelling flood, to sweep offenders into the dread abyss. Ah! sinner, tremble. Unless your head has some almighty shelter, you cannot escape.

The truth of God, too, points an inexorable sword. It has decreed, that every sinner must die. Can it recall the righteous word? Can it be false? But false it is, unless the vengeance fall. Sinner, what shield will hide you from this blow?

Satan moreover follows with huge strides. He claims the sinning soul as his. He has commission to destroy all, who are sin-marked. His eye is keen. His steps have lightning speed. His hate is bitter. He delights to slaughter souls, and drag them to the beds of flames. Ah! sinner, tremble. This cruel foe will surely seize you, unless you reach some shelter higher far than earth—some fortress stronger far than human arm can raise.

These adversaries rush on apace. Who undismayed can hear their nearing steps? Thus the fleeing manslayer is a faint shadow of the pursued sinner. Do any cry, whither shall we flee? Is there a Refuge? The question opens the main tidings of this type. Yes. The sheltering cities represent our Refuge. Would that all multitudes, who throng this earth, could hear the blessed truth! Would that a voice of thunder could pervade all lands, proclaiming—Refuge. Would that from shore to shore—from hill to hill—from plain to plain, the echo might resound, a Refuge is prepared, full—complete—secure.

Draw near, ye guilty sons of men. You need not die. Approach, all ye, whom sin oppresses—conscience terrifies—and torturing memory scares. You may be safe. Flee, all who tremble, lest your souls should perish. You may have peace. Fears may be lulled. Joy may succeed to anguish. You may face every foe, and laugh to scorn your every threat.

There is a Refuge. It is Christ the Lord. Flee to Him. Flee.

God has been pleased, in wondrous love, in overflowing grace, to set Him as a skreening sanctuary. The word is pledged, that all in Him are everlastingly secure. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus." Rom. viii. 1.

Let faith now calmly gaze on this city, and mark its towers. Christ's person is the grand pillar of security. His strength is full omnipotence. He is Jehovah-Jesus. Who then can snatch from His protecting arms? No one, who is not mightier than God, can burst these gates. While Jesus lives, and lives the mighty God, this safety is complete.

His finished work builds up the Refuge. The walls—the

bulwarks of this city—are red with blood. There is inscribed above each gate—"Christ died." Justice draws near. It sees the mark: and asks no more. The wounds of Christ are the deep grave of God's avenging sword. Believer, you may meet justice with the bold challenge, Nothing is due from me. My heavenly Surety paid His life for mine. In Him—by Him—I clear your uttermost demand.

The law's stern curse falls harmless here. It falls, indeed, because it may not be infringed. But Christ receives its weight. And all, locked up in Him, are as unharmed, as Noah within the ark.

Satan pursues up to these gates. But here he pauses. Wherever he finds sin, there he demands his prey. Polluted souls bear mark, that they are his. But all within these walls are washed, and cleansed, and purified and decked, and beautified. He must confess, that they are no more his. He must retreat. Their sins are blotted out. Therefore he cannot touch.

Blessed be God, for this sure Refuge! Reader, imagine every foe in eager chase. See them advancing, in strong tide. Mark their wild rage and frantic hate. Hear their affrighting menaces. See their terrific arms. Survey the terrible array. Then rush to Jesus. From all He rescues. From all he skreens. The vilest sinner, nestling in His arms, is safe—safe, as the inmates of the highest heaven—safe, as Jehovah on His throne.

Mark, too, this Refuge is at hand. In Israel the slayer had to flee ofttimes along a tedious road. Our city stands beside us. At each moment the cry is in our ears, Behold Me. Behold Me. "The righteousness, which is of faith, speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is. to bring Christ down from above) or who

shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.) But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart." Rom. x. 6, 7, 8. Outstretched arms invite you. Fall this day within them. The gates are close. Enter this hour. Now all is ready. Oh! linger not. Now is the accepted time.

Believer, you are within this Refuge. You know it to be home of joy unspeakable, and full of glory. Your experience testifies, that its clime is "the peace of God, which passeth all understanding." Surely, then, you will cleave tightly to it. Set not one foot beyond the holy precincts. Many temptations will allure you to come forth. Oh! stir not. Abide in Christ. If in unguarded moment you should stray, how instantly some fearful blow is aimed!—how suddenly some wound is felt!

Would you be safe through life—in death—for ever? Then cleave to Christ, as ivy to the tree, as limpet to the rock. When Israel's high-priest died, the slayer left his shelter. But your High-Priest for ever lives, therefore for ever you must tarry.

And when you realize your mercies and your safe retreat, can your heart fail to love—your lips to praise—your life to serve? Can you now see such multitudes exposed to wrath, and almost death-struck, and not allure them to your loved Refuge? Strive, strive, by every means to call them in. Above all, agonize in prayer, that God's all-conquering Spirit may fly speedily throughout earth's bounds, opening blind eyes to see their danger, exciting anxious hearts to rush to this only Refuge.

THE PROPHET.

"*The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me.*" DEUT. xviii. 15.

ALL fulness dwells in Christ. Reader, come ponder—praise—admire—adore Him. They, who know Him, never can commend enough. Ignorance alone neglects—despises—disesteems.

The neediest of needy sinners in Him find all supply. He is salvation's overflowing well. He fills all vessels, so that they can hold no more. He is a treasure-house, in which gold never fails.

Let the surface of this truth be touched. You are sin-soiled. Here is a fountain of all-cleansing blood. Wash, and be whiter, than the spotless snow. Satan, and self, and live-long trespasses condemn. Here is a wounded side, presenting an acquitting plea. Your best obedience is a filthy rag. Here is the righteousness of God—a perfect covering—a glorious robe. Your heart by nature is a lifeless stone. Christ sends His Spirit, and the entrance is life. He is a Priest, offering His blood—living to intercede—pouring down blessings. He is a King—ruling above—within—around. He is a Prophet, giving all knowledge—leading in wisdom's paths—diffusing floods of light—teaching salvation's lessons.

It is this latter office, which now claims special thought

Let us approach to it by enquiring, what man's state must be, unless rays beam from heaven?

When sin invaded earth, knowledge of God was slain. That lovely plant was blighted to the root. That beauteous column fell a shivered ruin. The mind lost power to fly aloft. Its wings were clipped. The eye was dim to pierce the skies. The wish and skill to find out God were utterly extinct. Man's intellect—alert to grovel in the dust—could never scale this height. Here mental shrewdness drivelled, as a fool. Witness the silly failures of philosophy's most boasted efforts. Unless, then, some revelation had been vouchsafed, God and His essence must have been shrouded in impenetrable night. Man could not dig such jewel out of his own quarry. He could not find it in his own empty chambers. Along a brief career of blindness he must have gone down to that deep prison-house, where darkness ever darkens, and God is never seen. The world by wisdom knows not God.

The case of need, then, is most clear. But all is met by Jesus. He undertakes to save, and undertakes to teach. The Church's Saviour is the Church's Prophet. He is not slow to enter on His work. In Eden's garden, where the light expired, He strikes a new spark. There He is quick to speak of remedy and rescue—of a woman-born Saviour—and His final triumphs. As time rolls on, He adds fresh light. By types, by prophecies, by figures, and by signs, He pictures redemption. He raises holy men, and puts His words into their mouths. He shakes a torch of truth in the world's night. He shows His Calvary through vistas of long time: and so guides many a benighted pilgrim in the path to heaven.

Thus the Prophet's voice is early heard—the Prophet's school is early open. But in appointed time, the Prophet-God

must come in person. Moses thus states the fact. "The Lord thy God shall raise up unto thee a Prophet of thy brethren, like unto me." Let us now mark the marvellous fulfilment.

1. Our Prophet shall be of our brethren—one of our house.

Here is considerate wisdom. If He were solely God, His mission must be death, not life. Humanity must perish at the sight. If He stooped only to angelic order, how could He mix with denizens of earth? How could we hang upon His lips? But our Prophet verily is man. He dwelt here one of our family. He hid His glories in our tent of clay. He trod life's walk, our very brother. Therefore, with fearless love, we may approach. We may sit down, with Mary, at His feet. We may recline, with John, upon His breast. As the disciples on the way to Emmaus, we may cling to His side. We may confidingly disclose the history of our souls. A brother will not scorn a brother's tale. When we seek counsel, He will gladly—fully—tenderly impart. As a near kinsman, He invites, "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls." Matt. xi. 29.

2. But more. The Prophet shall not be only man. He shall be man marked with a wondrous sign. He shall appear another Moses. Israel's leader shall revive in Him. As face to face, He shall respond to a conspicuous type.

This similitude must now be traced. The search, amid a mass of profit, distinctly proves, that an omniscient mind pervades all revelation's story. No chance could frame a close resemblance between distant men. Infidelity cannot maintain such folly. Christ, then, foreshown as Moses, coming as Moses, stamps His commission with a divine seal. In Him,

this type is realized: and in Him alone. For until he appeared, there was no counterpart to Moses. Since He ascended, none such has arisen.

See, how the pictures correspond. Moses is born. No peaceful cradle rocks the child. No mother's arms securely clasp him. A tyrant dooms him to immediate grave. He is cast to the Nile's waves.

Jesus is born. He, too, reposes in no tranquil home. No rapturous welcomes greet the heaven-sent babe. In Herod another Pharoah plots. Massacre casts a wide-spread net to catch Him. Thus He is Moses-like in early persecution.

Moses at the appointed time goes forth from Egypt. Jesus is banished to the self-same spot, that out of Egypt God may call His Son. Hos. xi. 1. Egypt sends out the human type. The heavenly antitype leaves the same country.

When Moses hastens to avenge his nation, what is his welcome? It is rejection. Derision scorns his claims. Jesus, the mighty Saviour, comes. There is deliverance in His heart and in His hand. But His own receive Him not. He is despised and reviled. The cry pursues Him, Away with Him, Away. Jesus and Moses are alike thrust out.

Moses retires awhile. The wilderness conceals him. At last, as the sun issuing from a cloud, he breaks from darkness. Thus Jesus passes many years in deep seclusion. Unknown in Nazareth the God-man toils. Earthly obscurity could not be more obscure.

When Moses shows himself again, astounding wonders prove his high commission. Nature at his command changes its course. Prodigies attest, that God is with him. So Jesus moved as God on earth. He willed, and the blind saw—the deaf heard—the dumb spake—the dead lived—each form of

sickness fled—abundance fed the hungry crowds—the water turned to wine—the sea became a pavement for His feet. In form He stood as man. In power He worked as God.

Moses must die before the people can pass Jordan's waters. He must endure a signal penalty for his offence. And must not Jesus die, before His people can pass heaven's gates? Yes. Their vile sins were all on Him, and on the cross due suffering must be paid. As Moses was at birth—in life—in death: so Jesus at birth—in life—in death, responded.

Moses meditated between heaven and earth. From the mount he brought down God's commands. He offered Israel's prayers. He made intercession and prevailed. Thus Jesus is our great Day's-man. He represents His children before God. He represents our God to us. He gives the Gospel-law. He ever prays, and ever is He heard.

Moses was favoured with most close communion. While dreams and visions taught the other seers, God communed with him face to face. Thus Jesus in counsel—purpose—will—ever was Jehovah's fellow. From all eternity He was by Him, as one brought up with Him, and He was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him. Prov. viii. 30. All salvation's scheme was spread as a chart before Him.

Such is the resemblance. But the difference is infinite. Moses is but a twilight gleam. Our Jesus is the midday splendour. Moses is a tiny rill. Our Jesus is the shoreless ocean. Moses appears a little bud. Jesus is the full fragrance of the opened flower.

From contemplation of these outward signs, let us now enter within the Prophet's school: and drink in His amazing lessons. What grand instructions meet us! Behold! His mighty hands draw back the curtain, which hides God. He holds a text-

book, bright with saving truth. This text-book is His own cross. Jehovah is there opened out as loving sinners, and yet hating sin—just, yet forgiving—righteous, yet pardoning—holy, yet peopling heaven from unholy earth.

The prophet leads onward to knowledge of Himself. He bids faith come, and read His heart. There are the names of all His chosen seed indelibly inscribed. There is love, preceding and out-living time. He shows the virtue of His blood to obliterate the crimson dye—to wash out deepest stains of guilt—so to pay debts, that Justice has no further claim—so to acquit, that accusations cease. Wondrous lesson! It calms the conscience into peace. It kindles the flame of love. It changes the whole heart into devoted service.

He teaches the marvel of His righteousness—a robe so bright, that God Himself cannot sufficiently admire—so pure, that angels are unclean beside it. He assures, that His redeemed may take it—plead it—wear it. He tells of His prevailing prayer—ever encircling the mercy-seat. He teaches faith to hear its constant cry, Father forgive them, for my blood is shed—spare them, for I have suffered—remember the Covenant, and pour all blessings on them.

Lessons are added revealing the Spirit's grace. He melts the stony heart. He turns the perverse will. He stills the rebel-passions. He opens the blind eye to see that sight of sights—the Christ of God. He opens the deaf ear to hear the music of that voice—Come unto Me.

The Prophet teaches, too, the righteous path, which leads to Zion's rest. He tells, how saints obey and please their God. He imprints the truth, that holiness is evidence of faith—and that the living tree must bear good fruit. Such is a scanty outline of the Prophet's lessons.

Reader, do you eagerly exclaim, I fain would be a pupil! Then take up your Bible. Here Christ comes to teach. Throughout it His voice sounds. He speaks in every verse. Make it your constant study. Think every hour to be lost, in which you glean not from it. Draw near with reverence, as to a speaking God. The ground is holy, let no proud thoughts intrude. Approach with prayer, beseeching the Prophet to cause His Spirit to illumine the page. Approach with faith, not doubting, that your soul will thrive. Call on Him to fulfil His office. Tell Him your ignorance and ardent thirst to learn. He will be true. He will instruct you unto profit. All Zion's "children shall be taught of God." Join then the happy scholars of this school. These lessons cast out every care. They are eternal life. They work conformity to heavenly image. As we imbibe His truth, our souls put on His image.

Ye ministers, it is your work to propagate the lessons of this school. Come then to Christ for every thought. Obtain from Him your every word. Let your instructions always echo Him. Sad! when a teacher stands before his flock to unsay what the Lord has said—to contradict His simple verities—to set some fiction in the place of truth—to scatter base coin in the room of gold. Beware! beware! Let all your sermons flow in the one channel, "Thus saith the Lord." In every pulpit let the great Prophet's voice be clearly heard.

THE CURSE.

"*He, that is hanged, is accursed of God.*" DEUT. xxi. 23.

THIS is a terrific word. It shows the misery of miseries—the inmost core of agony—the very soul of anguish—the sting of woe—despair's extremity. This sum of evil is the Curse of God.

When God blesses, sorrow is joy—pain has sweet ease—and burdens lose their weight. Beneath His smile, the bed of sickness is repose, and death's approach is welcomed. If He be absent, there is a void, which nothing can supply. But if He frown, what horrors multiply! What shall be said, then, of that Curse, which is His uttermost display of wrath! Better, far better, not to have been born, than to meet this. O my soul, whatever be the cost, escape it.

With this resolve approach the text before us. The outside casket may seem rough, but it contains a precious jewel. "He, that is hanged, is accursed of God."

The meaning must be primarily sought. Mark, this is no statement, that criminals uplifted on a cross thereby pass into deeper guilt. There was, indeed, extremest ignominy in this mode of death. It was the brand of utter loathing. But man's contempt entails not divine curse. Earth may abhor, whilst heaven approves. The cross could never be the cause Curse. A saint might rise to heaven from that tree. It is not meant, then, that a man, by being hanged, becomes accursed of God.

This word describes not malefactors in the mass. It is particular. It has a Prophet's voice. It is a Gospel-sign. It eyes exclusively the Crucified Jesus. It only tells the fact, that He, who came to bear God's Curse, should hang upon the tree. It pictures His especial mode of dying. A cross shall be the evidence, that Jesus thereon sustains the law's full threat.

Reader, this brings us to ponder closely the Lord's work. From all eternity it was decreed, that He should bear His people's sins. This is the essence of the covenant of peace. He willingly consents. The guilt is all transferred to Him. Each violation of the law is charged to His account. He stands the guilty one. Thus all His ransomed are released from blame. Their penalties—their curse—are wholly claimed, received, and borne by Him. A proxy suffers all, that they may suffer none.

These are the terms arranged in everlasting counsels. The Saviour is to be a substitute. The saved are to be free, because He pays. The law remits no due. It takes all from another's hand. Jesus is a vicarious Curse.

Such is God's grace—such the Redeemer's love—such the simplicity of Salvation's scheme. This text, then, gives a signal mark, whereby the Curse-sustaining Surety shall be known. Already had a typal picture taught the truth. A brazen serpent, hanging on a pole, had shown the Saviour hanging on a tree. But here plain words speak plainly. Hanging is now distinctly named. The voice cries, He, that is hanged, is the Curse of God. No doubt remains. It stands announced, that when the true Deliverer shall appear, upon the cross He shall expire. A pledge is given, too marvellous for man's invention: too clear for man to misinterpret.

If this should fail, faith loses her sure ground. If other death makes Christ its prey, Christ takes not the Curse away. The Gospel-fabric crumbles into dust.

But this fails not. Without the city's gate, the cross is raised. To it the Lord is bound. On it He is upraised, a spectacle to God, to angels, and to men.

But wondrous steps lead to this wondrous end. It seemed, as though it could not be. While Israel's power remained supreme, the cross was not a Jewish malefactor's death. If Jesus die, then, by their rule, He will not die with pierced hands and feet. Stones will crush. But difficulties vanish before God's decree. The sceptre, therefore, passes from the ancient people. The Roman law prevails. It must condemn and execute. But, when the Romans slay, they crucify. Hence Christ, sentenced by Pilate, is hurried to the tree. Hence on the cross He hangs. The prophecy is thoroughly fulfilled. And faith, pointing to Calvary, shouts, Our God is true: Jesus completely saves: "He, that is hanged, is accursed of God."

Reader, here for a moment take your meditative seat. But vain the cross, except the Spirit gild it with His light. Therefore send forth the fervent cry, Come, Holy Ghost, teach me the glory of Calvary's scene!

The prominent truth is this. Jesus there hanging is the Curse of God.

Fully to realize the joy of this, we must distinctly understand the Curse. Whence springs it? What kindles this fierce flame? Disobedience is the one cause. If all men loved their God—if His one law ruled in each heart—beamed in each look—spake in each word—moved in each step—then earth would not have known the name of Curse. The loving

child, walking with God, would only bask in smiles, and feast on blessings.

But ah! how different is the case! In Adam's fall the human family pass into rebellion's realm. The fountain-head, being poisoned, only can send evil from it. Hence wrath arises. Hence the Curse thunders.

Reader, make this truth practical. For until ruin be discerned, Christ's shelter never will be sought. Boldly then ask, Is this Curse mine?

Let God reply. Behold His mirror. View yourself therein. Take His true standard. Measure yourself thereby. Produce His faultless scales. There weigh yourself. The Spirit from His lofty throne thus speaks, "Cursed is every one, that continueth not in all things, which are written in the book of the law, to do them." Gal. iii. 10.

Oh! solemn word! But it is plain as solemn. Hear it, ye sons of men. Sift carefully its several parts. What is written in this edict-book? The terms are brief and exact. They ask for love to God—to man. This is the one demand: and this must reign in every movement of the heart from cradle to the grave. All thought must flow in one broad channel—love. All words must sound one echo—love. All works must have this spring—this course—this end. Exception there is none. This rule's enclosure holds our total race. No rank ascends above it. No poverty descends below it. Gold cannot purchase license. Penury cannot evade. Talent and learning cannot frame excuse. All, who have breathed life's breath, from Adam's day to this one hour—all, who shall breathe, until the Lord's return—are under the distinct command of love.

If there be failure in one single thought, the law is broken, and the Curse accrues.

But eyes are slow to open to this giant truth. Could silly earth be one wide scene of unconcern, if this reality were felt? Could giddy crowds thus laugh and sport, if once they saw the hand of Curse upon them.

Reader, perchance you fondly reason, The law is broken, but the Curse will not fall. My pleas are many. They will land me on some rock. Well, then, produce your pleas. The law says, Give me unsullied love, and points to your defects. You cannot deny guilt, and thereby you allow the Curse to be your due. But you reply, I erred in early days, with unformed mind and thoughtless heart. Be it so, early transgression is transgression still, and therefore you are Cursed. You add, but I was sorely tried. Could human nature stand, when so assailed? The law knows nothing of an extenuating cause. To err—be the occasion what it may—to err is to be Cursed.

But perhaps you plead your penitence—your broken-heart—your streaming eyes,—your smitten breast,—the pavement worn out by your knees. Can penitence recall the past, or undo what is done? It cannot. Offence remains offence, and each offence is Curse.

Do you betake yourself to cries, and humbly supplicate mercy—reprieve—space for reform! Do you say, Let me commence my course afresh: blot out the debt, and let me enter on a new career! It cannot be. Past deeds have earned their wages. The wages must be paid, and they are Curse.

Reader, do not evade this reasoning. Whatever be your age or grade, to this point you are brought: in self—by nature—by your own deed—you stand accursed of God. There is no hour, in which love has not failed. Therefore each hour has linked you to the Curse.

But perhaps you ask, What is this Curse? You feel no present

wrath. The canopy of heaven is bright above. Shelter, and food, and friends, abound. Unnumbered comforts cheer your path. It may be so. But this present will not be always present. The future is drawing near. Death presses at your heels. And judgment follows death. Then sin's deserts must be received. And the deserts are Curse.

Do you still ask, What is the Curse? Words cannot fully tell. Thought cannot grasp the magnitude. No images can paint the boundlessness of this anguish. But it cannot fall short of this. God puts forth all His might—stirs up His utmost strength—strains every effort—all for one purpose: to assert His majesty—to avenge His broken law—to heap perdition on the offender's head. In brief, the Curse is Hell. Ah! what is here implied! Conscience is tortured by the undying worm. Remorse inflicts unmitigated stings. Memory upbraids with bitterest reproach. The body writhes in all intensities of pain. Each sense gapes, as inlet of agony. God is far off. Blackness of darkness thickens all around. Satan insults. Wretched companions deepen the horror by their wails. The woe increases by full knowledge of eternal hopelessness. Years will roll on, but misery will be misery still. Ages will follow ages, but respite will not dawn. The present will be ever present, an infinity of suffering. Such is an outline of the Curse—just—merited—and sure. It must be. The broken law demands it. It will be. God's truth declares it.

But wherefore is this picture drawn? The purport is to endear the tidings of escape. The motive is to magnify the glorious truth, "He that is hanged," even Jesus, "is accursed of God." The desire is, to win all thoughts to Him—the substituted Curse.

With this intent let us return to Calvary. The cross is

there erected. The mighty God-man is dragged to it. The nails affix Him, and He there expires. Thus He becomes the Curse of God. Thus the whole vengeance falls on Him. He there bears all the anguish, which would have been His people's doom, if they had tossed for ever on flame-beds. No grain of misery is withheld. No pity spares Him. The Curse—the dreadful Curse—the total Curse—in all its boundless length and breadth, pours its whole weight upon Him.

Surely, then, all, who are contained in Christ, may now confront the law. Let it bring forth their guilt. They own the justice of the charge. Let it cry, Take my Curse. They point to Jesus taking all. The plea is valid. They cannot suffer what their Surety has first borne. They are secure and free, simply because He has endured for them.

Believer, will you not live beside the cross! Can you withdraw your eyes! Read its clear language. Take its rich comfort. Clasp its full joy. Doubt not—be verily assured—that it absorbs your Curse. Drink its deep streams of peace. And bless your precious Lord, who thus vicariously saves. Give all your heart—give all your life—to Him. Is He not worthy! Think, that, without His love, your endless state would have been endless Curse. Think, that, through His curse-bearing death, your present state is blessing—your eternal home is glory.

JESUS VERY NIGH.

"*The word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it.*" DEUT. XXX. 14.

HERE the Gospel beams forth brightly. This is a picture with Christ in the foreground. Here is a needle, pointing to Him—the pole. There is no place for doubt. Cavils are silenced. For the Spirit, who thus speaks by Moses, interprets also by the mouth of Paul. He draws back every veil. He rolls away all clouds; and shows the Lord, as the heart and marrow of this record.

This passage, then, is rich in exceeding worth. As such, it should be studied with exceeding care. Paul thus unfolds it:—"Moses describeth the righteousness, which is of the law, that the man, which doeth those things, shall live by them." Rom. x. 5. Mark, ye who fondly dream of human merit. The legal covenant is clearly stated. Fulfil the terms—perform the works—bring an obedience without one blemish—an unbroken whole—and then the recompense is earned. Then life eternal is won as a rightful due. But if transgression be incurred, the mouth is closed—the plea is gone—reward is forfeited. Who can say, pay me, for my task is incomplete! or, give me the prize, although it is unwon! or, crown me, though I am vanquished in the race! But such is the language of self-righteous men. Can folly be more foolish—

blindness more blind! Thus merit-claimants grope down this dark path to a darker night.

Paul proceeds to state the contrast. "But the righteousness, which is of faith, speaketh on this wise." Rom. x. 6. Blessed be God! All glory to His sovereign grace! There is a righteousness pure—perfect—wrought not by man, but by Christ. It is declared to be "of faith:" because faith's happy sons receive it—wear it—plead it; in it they stand and prosper; by it they mount to heaven. This righteousness is here introduced, as a person uttering a glorious voice: "Say not," O anxious sinner, "in thine heart, who shall ascend into heaven? (that is to bring Christ down from above) or, who shall descend into the deep? (that is to bring up Christ again from the dead.) But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth and in thy heart, that is, the word of faith, which we preach."

"The word is nigh thee." Do any ask, What word? The answer is, "The word of faith!" The Gospel-tidings about Christ; that word, which faith hears—prizes—welcomes—clings to—lives by: that record, from which delightedly it draws strength—peace—joy—comfort—glory.

We here are plainly told, that this word was very nigh to Israel's sons. Their knowledge was comparatively twilight, but still abundant gleams brake on them from the Sun of Righteousness. Their every rite was Christ, in shadow. He was the soul of every ordinance. He was reflected by the tabernacle in all its parts. The altars stood His graphic form. He died in every dying lamb. He bled in all the flowing blood. He groaned in every victim's groan. The curling incense was His fragrant prayer. The veil portrayed His flesh. The priest is the resplendent robes—in every sacrificial act—

In the uplifted hands—in the grand words of blessing, showed Him, as He ministered below, and as He ministers above. The leper preached the malignity and cure of sin. The true instruction from Mosaic lips was Christ—His grace—His person—and His perfect work. The outstretched finger of each part pointed to Him. A constant voice called to one sight—"Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world:" turn to the promised seed—the bruiser of the serpent's head—the great High-priest—the efficacious blood. Leviticus was a mirror, in which our elder brethren might read the full salvation, which the Father planned, and which the Son in due time achieved. Thus Gospel-truth was very nigh to Israel's sons.

Reader, learn hence to study Moses with mind intent on Christ. Dig in this mine, as miser eager for pure gold. The flowers of this garden all breathe heavenly fragrance. As salt is in each ocean's drop, so Jesus is each portion of these rites. You lose the prize, except you find Him. Never take only superficial chaff from fields of such rich grain.

But if the Lord was "very nigh" in ancient signs, is He not more than nigh to those, on whom the full light shines? Believer, come then and realize your favoured state. Bask on your sunny hill. Luxuriate in your abundant pastures. Walk up and down your spicy gardens. To you there should not be a desert-spot. The whole scene should blossom as a rose.

Jesus, indeed, is more than nigh. He came from heaven—He took our flesh, that He might unite us as living members to Himself, the living Head. Nearness has become oneness. The separating wall is broken down. The intervening distance is removed. He asks our hearts, that He may dwell

therein. He opens wide His arms, that we may there repose. "Abide in Me, and I in you."

Precious truth! There is no place, nor time, nor state, when faith may not uplift the eye—open the ear—put out the hand—and realize a present Saviour, Friends may depart—death may sever tightest bands. But He, who ever lives, is ever living by our side. Solitude is not too lonely for His visits. Crowds extrude Him not. The morning and the evening hours—the busy day—the silent night—alike admit Him. Clime is no hindrance. In realms of snow or plains of scorching heat, the Saviour journeys and tarries with His faithful servants. The rich man's hall is not above His reach—the poor man's hut is not below it. He, whom the heaven of heavens is narrow to contain—He, whom space cannot hold—He, from whose sight the angels veil their eyes—He, who sits throned co-equal on Jehovah's throne, always is "very nigh" to the poor worms, who take Him as their all.

Believer, here is your never-failing help. Let some cases, well known in Christian life, lend their aid to make this truth more clear. Conscience will often tremble on the review of sin. Iniquities will rise, as spectres from their long-closed graves. They will pass by in terrible array. Their hideous forms will point to torment, as their due. Their taunting voice will ask, What hope can dwell in hearts so stained! But turn from such terrors to your present Lord. He, too, is "very nigh," showing His hands—His side. You may there read with open eye the total ransom paid. There is no need of distant wanderings to escape these alarms. The wells of everlasting peace are open at your feet. "The word is very nigh unto thee, even in thy mouth and in thy heart." It shouts, "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white

as snow: though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." It adds, "There is redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins." Who can be sad, with such a volume full of pardons in his hand! Who can despair, while he can eye a guilt-removing Jesus!

When Satan ragingly assaults: when he puts forth his utmost might to thrust you headlong into depths of sin: when his ensnaring net encompasses your feet: when the betraying heart offers the key to let the murderer in: when the weak flesh begins to slide down the alluring slopes: when the world tenders its most fascinating charms—is there not peril? There is. Sad annals testify, how easily saints fall. But fall not. There is a staff near. "The word is very nigh unto thee—in thy mouth, and in thy heart." Listen to the sweet encouragements: "The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation." "The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly." "Resist the devil and he will flee from you:—draw nigh unto God, and He will draw nigh unto you." These mighty rocks are "very nigh." Set your feet fast upon them, and your stand is firm.

Sometimes afflictions roll wave upon wave. Your eye on all sides rests on woe. The dearest relatives are hidden in the grave. Bereavement sits your solitary guest. Pains rack the frame. Vigour and health decline. The nights are wearisome. The days bring anguish. Poverty can scarce obtain the needful raiment and the daily bread. The best designs are blackened by suspicions. Reproach and taunt ply their thick darts. Earth seems one wide-spread desolation. But in these troubles faith faints not. Christ's voice "is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth and in thy heart." A very chorus of support swells happily around: "The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not

want." "The Lord is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble." Surely these consolations will uplift the head above all threatening billows.

You may be called to duties, which surpass your strength. You feel, that you are weak to bear the burdens, and to scale the heights. You fear, that you must yield—defeated—crushed. And truly you must be overwhelmed, if you are alone. But alone you cannot be, whilst Jesus lives. If only you be really called, you may advance high above trembling. His voice "is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth and in thy heart." Grasp the ready promises: "As thy days, so shall thy strength be." "I, the Lord thy God, will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee, fear not, I will help thee. Fear not, thou worm Jacob, and ye men of Israel: thou shalt thresh the mountains, and beat them small, and shalt make the hills as chaff." Who can faint,—who will not rather be courageous, with help divine so near!

A trying hour comes on apace. Death still exercises universal sway. "It is appointed unto all men once to die." None should think lightly of an event so solemn. Momentous change! Time ceases! eternity arrives. Its accompaniments, too, are humbling. The powers droop. A languid body scarcely holds a languid mind. Beloved friends must all be left. Satan sees his last hope, and therefore musters his whole force to barb his final thrust. He draws with craftiest skill his farewell bow. This passage would indeed be dark and perilous, without a Saviour "very nigh." But the believer grasps a reviving word: "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for Thou art with me, Thy rod and Thy staff—they comfort me." Jesus, now gone to meeten mansions in the heavenly home, then comes to

receive His people, that where He is, there they may ever be. He draws the nearer, as the need increases. His everlasting arms are underneath. Thus the cold waters cannot drown. Thus martyrs' fires have been welcomed, and the excruciating stake been rapturously clasped. Believer, dread not death. Hope, rather, that Jesus will be "very nigh." Expect His presence—and it will be given. Ask His support, and it will surely come.

But after death, what meets you then! To die is to be with Christ. To soar from earthly scenes is to escape the clouds of sense—the mists of partial glance—the darkness of a prison-state. Then faith expires, and eternal sight expands. Then Jesus in very presence is for ever "very nigh."

Surpassing blessedness! amazing joy! perfection of all glory! The very thought is rapture. What must be the full reality! The expectation dazzles. What will be full enjoyment! The Lord—the Lord Himself—is clear in all the brightness of His Deity. Separation never can occur. Nothing can ever part. Jesus—Jesus in seen glory—is now "very nigh."

Some read these lines, whose conscience warns, that they possess no title to such bliss. Christ is not theirs by faith. They have not fled to Him for refuge. They cling not to His cross. Their hearts have never opened to admit this inmate.

Sirs! tremble. Oneness in time precedes oneness for ever. But wherefore tarry thus? Arise, make haste, draw near. The penitential prayer of faith soon reaches Him: for He is "very nigh."

planted deep its dagger in the inner man. Knowledge of God—love of His name—delight in holy intercourse—sweet fellowship with heaven—the happy worship of unsullied praise—the blissful gaze on the Creator's smile, and all the circle of pure joy, were buried in a deep grave. The soul became a total wreck,—a withered tree,—a dried-up stream—a wilderness of weeds—a starless night—a chaos of beclouded thought—a rebel's camp—the shivering home of misery—the region in which death reigned. The eyes were dim and saw not God. The face was turned away. Each step led downward. The hands were lifted in defiance. The mouth was opened to blaspheme. Man was a dying body holding a dead soul. He moved an unmixed evil—a sin-diffusing pest. All this is sad: but there are sadder things behind. This is tremendous woe: but deeper woe comes on. This is dark night: but darker shades will deepen yet. This is full wretchedness: but still the cup may hold more drops.

This fleeting scene must end. The earthly mansion must be left. Death comes. It drives poor sinners to their final home And what is that? Reader, shrink not—withdraw the darksome veil. Look down into the dread abode. Ponder the lost in their low cells. Hell is their everlasting doom. Think not, that hell is the mere phantom of a brain-sick thought. It is no fable fondly framed to scare weak minds. It is a near reality. It is a gigantic certainty. It is the sure conclusion of a godless life. It is the gulf, to which transgressing streams rush hopelessly. And it is not far away. It gapes before the feet. Another step may plunge the ruined into this abyss.

But what is hell? Ah! reader, may you never know. It is described by what is absent—what is present.

The negative misery declares, that God is not there. It is "everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power." 2 Thess. i. 9. Where God is absent, there is no light—no joy—no pure repose of heart. But in that darkness God is never seen. Therefore all is one blank of dreary wretchedness.

The faithful word moreover brings to view mountains upon mountains of active torment. From this immensity of agony let one element be drawn. The tender Jesus thus describes the end. "The Son of Man shall send forth His angels, and they shall gather out of His kingdom all things, that offend, and them, which do iniquity: and shall cast them into a furnace of fire; there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth." Matt. xiii. 41, 42. Fire shows pain's uttermost extreme. It has a pungent sting, maddening with all that is most hotly fierce. Hence hell is agony in all its might. Wailing denotes the bitter grief. Gnashing of teeth proclaims the deep remorse. And, as the suffering proceeds, it swells. There is no distant ray of possible relief. For ever will the smoke ascend. For ever will the anguish burn. For ever will the misery endure.

Eternal is hell's night. Such is it to lack life. Such is it to be heir of death.

But hearken, ye, who through rich mercy yet inhabit earth. A voice cries, "Let Reuben live and not die." There is a Saviour, who delivers from this death. There is a friend, who bestows heavenly life. Jesus appears, and on the cross endures the death, and by His righteousness brings in new life. The Father fully satisfied, says of each true Reuben, "Deliver him from going down to the pit, for I have found a ransom." Let him not die but live.

But what is this life? Believer, you must enter heaven to know. We read—we speak—we meditate—we hear of heaven; and bright and lovely is the prospect. But what thoughts—what words can estimate the actual bliss! Sin and temptation are without for ever. God and the God-man are there clearly displayed. There is no cloud—no veil—no distance—no separation—no departure. The ransomed, ever happy, ever hymning praise, float on wide oceans of delight.

And are there many joying in this joy? "Let not his men be few." The Father's love—the Saviour's grace—the Spirit's tenderness are large, and embrace many. A great multitude, whom no man can number, shout hallelujahs round the throne.

O my soul, seek to inherit Reuben's blessing. Give up all for heaven. It will immeasurably repay each sacrifice. The door is not yet barred. Press to enter in. Take it by violence. Jesus is the way. Walk in it. Jesus holds the key. Flee unto Him, and He will open wide the gates. He has spoken, and it must be: "Him that cometh to Me, I will in nowise cast out." John vi. 37. Many of Israel's true children there rejoice—will not you be among them? Draw life and energy from the patriarchal promise, "Let Reuben live and not die: and let not His men be few." Rest not, till you can say, Through grace, I live—through grace, I shall not die—through grace, I have my lot among the sons, who are not few

JUDAH

"This is the blessing of Judah: and he said, Hear, Lord, the voice of Judah; and bring him unto his people: let his hands be sufficient for him: and be Thou an help to him from his enemies." DEUT. xxxiii. 7.

JUDAH is the royal tribe. To it the throne, the sceptre, and the sway belong. It is the cradle of the nation's kings. This is great honour. But its main glory is its connection with the God-man Jesus. He is "the Lion of the tribe of Judah." A maid of Judah bears the wondrous babe. In Judah's house, the King of kings, the Lord of lords, puts on our flesh. Hence expectation eagerly surveys the blessing cast into its lap. Surely signal favours will deck the tribe so signally exalted. Surely the mercies in his crown will have transcendent lustre.

Let us now turn to listen. These sounds go forth: "Hear, Lord, the voice of Judah." One fact is instantly made clear. Judah is loud in prayer. That must be uttered, which is to be heard. Mute lips gain no reply. The silent tongue arrests no notice. Judah's voice then encompasses the mercy-seat. In spirit and in cry he often visits heaven. The opening words stamp him, as a praying tribe.

Prayer is the heart-home of each child of God. This is the first sign of new birth. This draws his morning-curtain. This wakens with his earliest thought. This is the atmos-

phere, which his soul breathes. This is the staff, on which he leans. Thus every act begins—proceeds—and ends. This bolts the evening door. This is the pillow, on which the head reclines. Trials—temptations—troubles—and life's countless ills, here find their refuge. When sins prevail, here is relief. When dangers threaten, here is sweet shelter. When mercies beam, they beckon to this sunny hill. Each place, and company, and time, promote this gainful traffic. The child of grace lives, as Judah, crying unto God: "Hear, Lord, the voice of Judah."

But what is prayer? The question is not vain. Many are prayerless, who seem prayerful. All glittering tinsel is not gold. It is not a vain attitude—nor repetition of unfelt words. It is not copious phrase. It is not the uplifted eye—the outstretched hand—the bended knee—the prostrate form—the smitten breast—the heaving sigh—the falling tear. All these may be, and yet no prayer.

It is reality, not outside show. It is the soul in earnest wrestling with God. It is the inner man's intensest agony. It is a mighty grasp clinging to Jehovah's strength. It is a struggling effort. It is the heroic cry, "I will not let Thee go." It is divine in origin—in confidence—in plea. The Spirit from on high kindles, and fans, and cherishes the flame. The covenant of grace is its strong rock. Standing on such vantage-ground, it boldly shouts the name of Jesus: and never shouts in vain.

But is not such prayer rare? O my soul, what is the answer of your secret hours? If you hang down a conscious head—pause, and take shame, that you are not more Judah-like.

Think of the motives calling to this exercise. A mercy-

seat stands ready. An open path invites. The door is never shut. The golden sceptre courts your touch. Calvary gives you an unfailing plea. Commands impel you. It is sin to hesitate. Promises, too vast to measure or to count, come forth in crowds to fill your hands. All blessings wait to be received. In this art, misery learns to smile: peace flows into the conscience: weakness becomes strong: faith matures: and every power to do and bear expands into a vigorous tree. Whatever be your age—state—frame—need—circumstance, be wise, and pray. Pray more. Cease not. Faint not. Judah's Son—the glorious Jesus—is your example, model, lesson. On earth, His life was prayer. In heaven, His intercession ceases not.

Mark, too, what rich encouragement pervades the first note of this blessing. "Hear, Lord, the voice of Judah." Fear not. No prayer was ever lost. It is the Spirit's voice within. God will not turn away. It sounds a name, which must be heard: all heaven will listen with delight. It is the child's entreaty: the Father's heart will melt. Grace is no grace—truth fails—and mercy hardens into flint, if this cry prospers not. If all the annals of all saints were spread, as an open page, their testimony would be this, true prayer will speed.

But this text belongs primarily to Judah's story, in which we read prayer's mightiest exploits. Mark David. We have a volume of his prayers. And with expiring breath he witnesses, "In my distress I called upon the Lord, and cried unto my God: and He did hear my voice out of His temple, and my cry did enter into His ears." 2 Sam. xxii. 7. Call Solomon; he begs, "Give me now wisdom and knowledge." 2. Chron. i. 10. Was he not heard? "Wisdom and knowledge are granted unto thee." Go back to Abijah's day. "When Judah looked

back, behold the battle was before and behind: and they cried unto the Lord." Instantly "the men of Judah gave a shout, and as the men of Judah shouted, it came to pass, that God smote Jeroboam and all Israel, before Abijah and Judah." 2 Chron. xiii. 14, 15. Proceed to Asa. The Ethiopians—a thousand thousand—threaten to destroy. The king sends forth this arrow: "Lord, it is nothing with Thee to help, whether with many, or with them that have no power; help us, O Lord our God, for we rest on Thee, and in Thy name we go against this multitude. O Lord, Thou art our God, let not man prevail against Thee. And then the Lord smote the Ethiopians before Asa, and before Judah: and the Ethiopians fled." 2 Chron. xiv. 11, 12. Jehoshaphat used well this weapon, and thus repelled the myriads of Ammon. Hezekiah thus wrestled against the Assyrians. An angel was sent forth to help: and the vast host became a pile of slain. He thus contended against malady: and sickness bloomed to health. 2 Chron. xxxii. 21, 24.

Jesus, this tribe's high pride, when on earth, gives the like witness: "I knew, that Thou hearest Me always." John xi. 42.

Believer, lift up your eyes. Pierce heaven with faith's keen gaze. You see your Jesus by the throne. What is His employ? He prays for you—for all His needy flock. And is He heard? Yes—every petition is success. He asks and gains all that His blood purchased—all that the covenant secures. Here is the spring of your soul's being, health, and weal. You thrive—you prosper—you prevail, because your mighty Advocate sues mightily. Your inward life is proof, that His intercessions triumph. "Hear, Lord, the voice of Judah." Judah's voice is ever heard.

The blessing thus continues? "And bring him unto his

people." The tribes were often called to war. The quiet hearth must then be left. Their feet must tread the tedious march. But in these cheering words they catch the hope of safe return. Here seems a promise, that their corpses shall not strew a distant land: but that a peaceful home again shall welcome the victorious troops. This primary purport floats upon the surface.

Believer, there is, moreover, something here for your support. You have a home. It is not this polluted scene. It is far off—in peace—in light—in purity—in heaven. And you shall safely reach it. The way may be both rough and tedious. But advance. The end is sure. Waves and storms may threaten to engulph the bark: but you shall enter the haven. The hill may be a wearisome ascent; but you shall gain the summit. Pluck this assurance from the word, "Bring him unto his people." The Lord's hand led you out from the world. The Lord's power will bring you to the company of the saved.

It is not altogether a strained thought, which applies these words to Jesus. He has a people, and greatly do they need His coming. This blessing seems a pledge of His arrival. The good Shepherd's flock is widely scattered. They wander far on hills, and vales, in every land, and every clime. Some pant beneath a tropic sun. Some shiver in perpetual snows. A watchful eye sees all. And in fit time each is approached. Jesus Himself draws near. He wins the heart. He enters in. He takes the throne. He shows His smile. He melts the rock. He turns the enmity to love. He sits the conqueror in a once rebel camp. All given by the Father come to Him, because He comes to them. They follow, because He calls. They run, because He draws He opens out His arms: and

then they flee quickly to the shelter. Thus faith finds an accomplishment of the words, "Bring him unto his people."

It follows: "Let his hands be sufficient for him." Judah was called to work and war. But there is comfort in each struggle. His hands shall not hang down. His vigour shall not droop. His energies shall still suffice. Is the task heavy? His strength shall bear unto the end. Is the fight long and fierce? He shall hold out.

Believer, to you each day brings burdens. Act faith, then, on this heaven-sent succour: "Let his hands be sufficient for him." So long as work remains to be performed—so long as conflicts last, your streams of power will not be drained. Their fountain cannot fail. David's triumph will be yours. "He teacheth my hands to war, so that a bow of steel is broken by mine arms. I have pursued mine enemies and destroyed them, and turned not again, until I had consumed them." 2 Sam. xxii. 35, 38.

Here, too, again behold your Lord. Were not His hands sufficient for Him? Hell arose with all its hosts: kings of the earth, and godless men conspired. But He strode over them to victory.

And still His arm is strong as Deity in your defence. It is most true, that you require illimitable aid. But you have it all in Him—your ever present succourer. If for one moment His hands fail, you sink. But rejoice—give thanks. His hands are braced with all sufficiency.

The blessing thus concludes: "Be thou an help to him from his enemies." All the true sons of Judah are thus made more than conquerors. What are they in themselves? There is no image weak enough to show their weakness. Their strength is feebler than the torturing reed—the driven dust—

the storm-tossed chaff. But all their enemies—countless in number—principalities in might—cannot destroy. And why? Only because the Lord of Hosts is with them—the God of Jacob is their refuge. Jehovah-Jesus is their shield and sword.

Reader, such is Judah's blessing. Let not the picture be a blank to you. See what rich clusters hang from this tree's boughs. See what wealth sparkles in this mine. Do you not long to share these mercies—to repose beneath this shade—to feed in these sweet pastures—to drink of this deep stream? Read it again. "Hear, Lord, the voice of Judah: and bring him unto his people; let his hands be sufficient for him: and be thou an help to him from his enemies." Mark the praying tribe addressing a prayer-hearing God. Mark the safe convoy to their home. Mark their sufficiency for every need. Examine well this chain of good. Can you desire, can you conceive, a happier lot? And may it not be yours? Did ever any ask, and not receive? When sinners knock in penitence and faith, the portals ever open. A blessing God—a blessing Saviour—a blessing Spirit are at hand. Let not indifference turn scornfully away. Take Judah's God, as yours: and Judah's heritage will surely be bestowed.

LEVI.

"*Of Levi, he said, Let Thy Thummin and Thy Urim be with Thy holy one, whom Thou didst prove at Massah, and with whom Thou didst strive at the waters of Meribah; who said unto his father and to his mother, I have not seen him: neither did he acknowledge his brethren, nor knew his own children; for they have observed Thy word and kept Thy covenant. They shall teach Jacob Thy judgments and Israel Thy law: they shall put incense before Thee, and whole burnt-sacrifice upon Thine altar. Bless, Lord, his substance, and accept the work of his hands: smite through the loins of them, that rise against him, and of them, that hate him, that they rise not again.*" DEUT xxxiii. 8—11.

LEVI was peculiarly the Lord's. This tribe toiled not in martial service. Its happy hours revolved in holy circuit. Its life was round the altars. The tabernacle was its charge, and its employ looked always unto God.

Thus it appears a ministerial type. We see in it the pastor's portrait. It represents that heaven-born, heaven-sent band, which stands apart to deal with man for God.

This is life's highest privilege—earth's grandest dignity—honour, which angels do not share—glory, which drives all other heroes inte the shade. The greatest minister is our greatest man. His words achieve the noblest triumphs on the world's stage.

What, then, will Moses' lips pour forth, when Levi's tribe comes for its blessing? Reader, draw near to hear! Spirit of God, draw near to teach!

Choice servants are addressed: therefore, choice gifts will be bestowed. Levi's outline is first drawn. Three bold characteristics are displayed. These threefold marks are holiness—acquaintedness with trial—impartial zeal.

1. The tribe is holy. "Let thy Thummin and Thy Urim be with Thy holy one." Holiness! What is it, but the image of our God—conformity to Christ—the stamp of heaven upon the soul. It is God living in the heart—moving in each step—breathing in each breath—heard in each word—pervading the whole man. It is the Spirit's presence, saying, let there be light, and there is light: let there be love, and there is love: cleaving sin's roots, and they decay: sowing pure seed, and it bears fruit. It is an upward course—leaving the world behind—eschewing evil—hating what Jesus hates—panting to be godlike. It is that lofty state, which springs from reception of the Gospel. Truth sanctifies. Error is obliquity in mind and life. Christ seen—Christ loved—forms the new man. So, too, it is happiness without alloy. The holy man alone is happy. All sin is misery. Departure from it is the path of peace.

Servants of Christ, seek holiness. Let this crown sparkle on your brow. From head to foot let this robe clothe you. Inhabit earth as Zion's citizens. So will your life preach louder than your lips. So will your walk have magnet-influence, attracting unto heaven. A holy shepherd wins a holy flock.

2. Next, Levi had conflicted with temptation: "Whom Thou didst prove at Massah, and with whom Thou didst strive at the waters of Meribah."

It was one of Israel's darkest days, when the camp murmured, because water failed. We lack clear evidence, that

Levi was not tainted with this guilt. But from this mention, we take hope, that he stood firm, when others fell. But whether he resisted or gave way, the temptation put him to the test. Massah proved him. Meribah sifted his principles.

All Adam's sons live tempted lives. Satan is not yet chained. There is no place—no heart—which he infests not. His wily crafts exceed all power to count. And wrath increases, as the time grows less. But the Lord's ministers are his especial hate. Against them every dart is hurled. For them all snares are laid. And why? Their fall brings many to the dust. The sheep will wander, when the shepherd strays.

But still his weapons often wound himself. For frequently temptation proves to be a purifying furnace, and a brightening file. The tempted lose their dross, and gain more brilliant polish. So, too, it is a school of discipline. Here ministers drink deeply of experience's cup. They thus become expert to sympathize with others' woes: to open out the adversary's arts: to point to strongholds of defence: to stay the slipping feet: and to pour balm into the stricken soul. Thus trials give ability and skill. Satan uses them; and the result is injury to himself.

3. Levi has, too, the praise of honest zeal: "Who said unto his father and to his mother, I have not seen him: neither did he acknowledge his brethren, nor knew his own children." These words again remind of awful evil in the camp. Moses was absent in the mount. The impatient people ask for gods to lead them on. A golden calf is made. They worship it. The air echoes with festive noise. Moses in haste comes down, and cries, "Who is on the Lord's side? let him come unto me. And all the sons of Levi gathered themselves together unto him." Ex. xxxii. 26. They draw their swords. They

rush to vindicate the cause of God. They spare not friend nor relative. No ties of kindred or of blood skreen from due vengeance. Where they find sin, there they deal death. God gave the zeal, and braced their nerves, and smiled upon their deed, and thus applauds it.

Ye ministers, mark this. Your office calls you to reprove—rebuke—condemn. Evil is evil, wheresoever it is seen. You must stand flint-like before all the world. If relatives and friends transgress, they must be boldly checked. You speak for God. You must be honest, fearing no man's face.

Levi, thus portrayed in threefold character, then receives a sixfold blessing.

1. A grand distinction first appears. "Let thy Thummim and thy Urim be with thy holy one." The purport is distinct. Let Levi ever stand a priest before his God. Let the breastplate, with its mysterious contents, ever gird him. These contents, though shrouded in some mist, intimate perfection and light. At once we see the foremost ornaments of ministerial life.

Perfection! Nothing inferior may be sought. The walk may have no stain. The garments must be purely white. The keen observer may detect no fault. Oh! what vigilance—what care—what prayer are needed! Lapses in those, who guide, produce extensive ruin. Lord, lead Thy servants in a perfect way! Be a protecting shield around! Adorn them beauteously with every grace!

Light! Father of lights, be Thou their light! May they for ever dwell beneath Thy rays, and, as reflecting mirrors, scatter radiance around! May they go forth, as champions clad in armour of light! Thus may true Thummim and true Urim ever be the glory of those, who are ambassadors for Christ!

2. Next, "They shall teach Jacob Thy judgments and Israel Thy law." Here is the pastor's solemn dignity. He occupies a pulpit-throne. Thence he announces the decrees of the eternal kingdom. The flock sit round to hear God's judgments—to receive God's law.

Preacher, take heed. Your volume is heaven-inspired. Add not: it is impiety. Detract not: it is sacrilege. It is not yours to frame a system or devise a code. Your message is prepared. Your text-book is divine. Read and proclaim. Let all your teaching flow in one pellucid stream: "Thus saith the Lord." The Gospel committed to your trust is God's glory—His wisdom in the highest—the transcript of His mind—the mirror of His love—the power, which drives out darkness, softens hearts, gives new birth to dead souls, breaks Satan's chains, snatches from hell, uplifts to heaven, converts bold rebels to devoted friends, and plants a paradise in the world's waste. Then preach this word—only—clearly—fully. Be faithful. Be distinct. Signs of Salvation will then surely follow. The seed of truth is never lost. It has an innate life. It is impregnate with divinity. Who can destroy! Truth long since would have died, if Satan or man's hate had power to slay.

3. Honours are added. "They shall put incense before Thee—and whole burnt-sacrifice upon Thine altar." They shall use sweet savour to ascend. The Gospel-savour is the sweet merits of Christ's fragrant work. They shall pile victims on the altar. The Gospel has but one victim—the God-man slain.

These words are as a trumpet-voice to warn each minister. The pulpit stands his golden altar, from which precious fragrance should never fail to rise. Sermons should all be

redolent of Jesu's worth. Each utterance should be, as curling incense, filling heaven and earth with joy. The pulpit stands, too, his brazen altar, on which victims bleed. The congregation should be led to sit around the cross. The dying Jesus should be the one grand sight—giving Himself a willing offering, that guilt may thus be cleansed, and sins obliterated, and debts paid, and curse removed, and God appeased, and hell's gates closed, and heaven's throne won.

4. It follows: "Bless, Lord, His substance." Levi had no allotted lands. "I am thy part, and thine inheritance," said God. Numb. xviii. 20. The tabernacle offerings are their store. A special maintenance is their lot. Peculiar servants are peculiarly sustained.

They must be well fed, whom God thus supplies. Let then no faithful pastor fear. He may not have—he covets not—abundance of earth's pelf. But the barrel will not fail. The cruise will still suffice. In God he has incalculable wealth. "The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance and of my cup: thou maintainest my lot." Paul testifies, "I have all, and abound: I am full." Phil. iv. 18.

5. It is encouragingly added: "Accept the work of his hands." Smile, Lord, when Levi thus draws near. Turn not from the prayer, the service, and the praise, which he presents upon Thine altar.

Here is the joy, the hope, the strength, the victory of the faithful servant. He knows, that truth proclaimed by life and lip—in public and in private—cannot but prosper. The Gospel-sickle reaps not in vain. Harvests of saved souls will be brought in. Heaven's garner will be filled. He will present before God's throne children begotten by his words—jewels drawn by his efforts from nature's quarry, and polished

as pillars for the palace of the King. The labour is not in vain. The Lord accepts.

6. Lastly: "Smite through the loins of them, that rise against him, and of them that hate him, that they rise not again." A Korah—a Dathan—an Abiram rose to assail.—But their defeat was signal. They died not the common death of men. The gaping earth devoured them. Numb. xvi. 32.

So faithful ministers must always expect the adversary's rage. They foil him most. Therefore he most desires their ruin. As against Christ—so against them—he marshals his whole force. But while he mightily assails, omnipotence protects. While his many legions harass, an infinity of love defends. Thus they hold on. Thus they hold out. Thus they will ever bloom, like Aaron's rod, until the latest saint is gathered in. Their teaching voice will sound on earth, until the hallelujah is full-toned above. They go on conquering, for Jesus fights beside them.

Ye ministers, turn not from Levi, without many a solemn thought. There is no work like yours—so holy—so exalted—so godlike! There is no help like yours. Jesus, who sends you, goes forth by your side. There are no hopes like yours. The brightest crown is that, which sparkles with redeemed gems. Bless God—take courage—work. Uplift the cross with prayerful hands. Preach the true Christ. Live the true life of faith. Then Levi's full inheritance will raise you high. How high. God only knows! Christ's fellow-workers will not be low among Christ's fellow-heirs.

BENJAMIN.

"Of Benjamin he said, The beloved of the Lord shall dwell in safety by Him, and the Lord shall cover him all the day long, and He shall dwell between his shoulders." DEUT. xxxiii. 12.

BENJAMIN! Thoughts of love are quickly kindled by the very name. Affection folded Benjamin in its embrace. He closed the line of Jacob's sons, and thus no younger rival moved him from his fondled place. He was endeared, too, as the expiring Rachael's child. She died, when he began to live. Thus, all the feelings, which have softest sway, enshrined him eminently in his father's heart.

When then this tribe appears, our minds anticipate much tender favour. And it is so. A designation of endearment is adjoined: "Of Benjamin he said, The beloved of the Lord."

Reader, here pause. A wondrous truth refuses to be put aside. Give it glad welcome. Listen fully to its cheering tale. Imbibe the precious draught of its delight. Let its sweet fragrance perfume all your hours. The truth is this. The name pertains to every member of God's family: "Beloved of the Lord." Each child of God is loved, as a Benjamin, in heaven's palace.

What! loved of God! Love is the soul of feeling. It is the blazing of the heart in warmth. It is a current of resist-

less strength. It places a dear object above self. It is intense desire for fellowship. It weeps, and joys, and thrives, in unison with another's sorrow and delight. It is the strongest impulse of the breast. It holds the rudder of the life. It is the principle, which many waters cannot quench, neither can floods drown it. Song viii. 7.

Is there such feeling in the realms of light towards denizens of earth? Yes, verily. Each of the heaven-born seed is loved with perfect love by the Triune Jehovah.

The Father loves—and writes His loved ones in the book of life: and chooses them to be the spouse, and crown, and glory of His Son: and sends His Christ to buy them out of ruin's grasp—to cleanse their filth in efficacious blood—to meeten them to dwell as partners of His throne.

Jesus so loves, that He puts on our flesh, and takes the place of the condemned, and bears in His own body all the just penalties of sin, and undergoes the uttermost of wrath, and drinks the very dregs of anguish. Attend Him through His painful walk on earth: approach the garden-mysteries: stand by the shameful cross: mark all the signs of infinite distress: hear the deep groans wrung from His agonized mind. The language of these sufferings reveals, how much, how truly, and how constantly He loved. Next raise the eye of faith, and see Him now at God's right hand. Whence those incessant prayers—those mighty pleadings—that watchful eye—those outstretched hands—that life devoted to one cause? His present acts repeat, that He still loves.

The Spirit loves. It must be so. This feeling draws Him to a sinner's heart. He ever finds that spot all ice—all death—all enmity to God. But still He enters in, and works a saving change. He exerts renovating might. He creates new life,

and light, and holy powers. He discloses the activity, the vileness, and the end of sin. He thus stirs up the trembler to flee unto redeeming arms. He gives him faith to take the title-deeds of heaven. He leaves not, nor forsakes, till grace expands into full glory. Such is the Spirit's work. And is not every part a manifest display of love?

Thus God is love. He never was, and never will be, but one ocean of eternal love. The truth, then, is most clear. Each real believer ever was, and ever will be a Benjamin. His is the title, "Beloved of the Lord."

Believer, ponder the value of this fact. Its preciousness exceeds worlds upon worlds of treasure. Our present scene is full of change, of coldness, and of hate. Friends die, or kindly feeling withers. A frown may freeze, where smiles were wont to cheer. But here is our solace. We look above. Heaven's love knows no eclipse. In that unfailing brightness we forget surrounding gloom. Here, too, we find a mighty magnet drawing us to holiness. We must love Him, who so loves us. We cannot love, and not desire to please. Hence His pure law becomes our true delight. The slavish chains fall off, and willing service is our joyful walk. Sense of God's love thus cheers and sanctifies.

Through this prelude we approach the blessing assigned to Benjamin. It proves, that God's love is a vast treasure of gracious gifts. It shows a threefold front. It strikes a triple cord. It brings the pledge of safety, constant shelter, and fellowship with God.

1. Safety. "The beloved of the Lord shall dwell in safety by Him." Survey the picture. It is lovely in repose. We seem to see a child without one care seated securely by a parent's side. No anxious fears disturb. Undoubting trust

spreads its calm influence. A Father, strong and watchful, is at hand. An arm is ready to defend. The happy son knows it, and confides.

The image tenderly depicts the true believer's blessed state. He sits in peace beside his God. Faith's wings have borne him upwards. His heart and thoughts have settled in a tranquil realm. The restless wanderings of former days are past. There was a time, when he was tossed about on stormy waves. He wandered hopelessly in search of peace. But now he rests in God. His home is by His Father's side. "The beloved of the Lord shall dwell in safety by Him."

This seat is safety. For think, how high it is upraised! It is with God. What foe can now assail? Satan's darts are very many, and impelled with mighty force. His arms, too, have exceeding skill. But these are heights above his reach The arrows from his strongest bow have but restricted wings. The shafts fly not to those lofty seats, where God's dear children cluster. They dwell in safety, for they dwell by Him.

A tender voice is ever heard, "Fear not, thou worm Jacob, and ye men of Israel: I will help thee, saith the Lord, and thy Redeemer the holy one of Israel." Is. xli. 14. Again it sounds, "I give unto them eternal life: and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand. My Father, which gave them Me is greater than all: and no man is able to pluck them out of My Father's hand." John x. 28, 29. Each tranquil Benjamin may realize, "If God be for us, who can be against us?" Rom. viii. 31. They dwell in safety by Him.

2. Constant shelter. This is a sweet phase of safety, and this is thus graphically promised: "The Lord shall cover him all the day long." The warrior is sheltered, whom a broad

shield surrounds. The sword may deal fierce blows—the spear may roughly thrust—all weapons may attack. But the assaults touch not. He stands unhurt. The inmates of a well-built house are skreened. The hurricane may rage. The hail may beat. The rain may pour down floods. But the roof spreads a sheltering defence. The strife of elements is warded off. So when the feathered mother spreads her sheltering wings, the hawk may soar above—the gathering clouds may menace—but the downy refuge covers. The young birds nestle free from harm.

Thus for each Benjamin a constant covert is provided. He needs it. No warrior is more sorely pressed. The whole artillery of hell seeks his destruction. No traveller is more exposed. Satan without—the world around—a treacherous heart within—assail his path. No infant bird is more beset with perils. A preying beak is ever ready to devour.

But he defies this multitudinous array. How is it? Is he not weak in self? Yes. His strength is feebler than a bruised reed. Alone he cannot face one single foe—much less the myriads of earth and hell. He is his shelter: "The Lord shall cover him all the day long."

It would have been abundant favour to have given some shield—or to have raised some roof—or to have spread some wing. But mercy provides more for Benjamin. The Lord Himself is the constant covering. The Lord, whose arms are infinite, ever secretes him in Himself. "Our life is hid with Christ in God." Who, then, can injure? "All the day long" the enemy may watch. "All the day long" the shelter skreens.

But the believer is more than sheltered from these perils. He is, moreover, covered from the condemning eye of God. His life must always be a mass of sin. What hateful filth

defiles him! But this may all be buried from God's sight. O my soul, ever realize the covering robe, which Jesus wrought and proffers. It is righteousness perfect—spotless—divine. This He delights to cast around you. Adorned with this, you fearlessly may meet Jehovah's scrutiny. No blemish can be found. This imputed beauty makes you fairer than angelic purity. Put on by faith this precious mantle, and then sing aloud, "Blessed is he, whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered." Ps. xxxii 1.

3. Fellowship with God. Benjamin's lot has this especial blessing. "He shall dwell between his shoulders." The shoulders are the borders—the outward coasts—the confines of the land. "Thus, "they shall fly upon the shoulders of the Philistines toward the west." Is. xi. 14. Here, then, it is pledged, that Benjamin's land shall just contain God's earthly courts. What the Lord says shall surely be. Therefore in appointed time the Temple, that hallowed structure, rose on the mount, which skirted this tribe's line. Such is the literal fulfilment. This promise then, in its first sense, assigns the position of the consecrated house.

But the grand import of this word is spiritual. The Temple is the symbol of a present God. In it true worshippers drew near. In it God met the souls, which sought Him. The pledge, then, of this dwelling in Benjamin's domain promises access to God. It pictures prayer ascending—answers returned—constant communion. And is it not the saint's delight to have this heavenly union! This is his constant feast: he dwells in God, and God in him: he is one with God, and God with him.

This fellowship is based in Christ. He is the connecting link. He is the Days-man. He has a divine hand, which

touches God. He has a human hand, which man may touch. Thus He unites the holy Father and the holy flock. This intercourse is very paradise. It is the antepast of heaven. It passes the veil, and penetrates the inner sanctuary. Faith, leaning on Christ's arm, lives in this happiness. With filial confidence it brings each trial—trouble—sorrow—need—affliction—doubt—distress, to a Father's ear. And God is near to cheer—to bless—to wipe the weeping eye—to soothe the wounded heart—to raise the drooping spirit—to send the pilgrim singing on his way. As the Temple was in the lot of Benjamin, so God is in the midst of Zion's sons. "He shall dwell between his shoulders."

Reader, do not you long to be an heir of Benjamin's large portion? Do you not feel, that it must be the crown of bliss to be thus safe—thus covered—thus free to heavenly intercourse! This becomes yours, when you are one with Christ. Is such your case? If not, why linger in peril, an unsheltered outcast? Draw near in faith. Wrestle in prayer. Invite Him to come in. He will not hesitate, and His entrance brings Benjamin's triple blessing—safety—constant shelter—fellowship with God.

JOSEPH

"*Of Joseph he said, Blessed of the Lord be his land, for the precious things of heaven, for the dew, and for the deep that coucheth beneath, and for the precious fruits brought forth by the sun, and for the precious things put forth by the moon, and for the chief things of the ancient mountains, and for the precious things of the lasting hills, and for the precious things of the earth and fulness thereof, and for the good will of Him that dwelt in the bush. Let the blessing come upon the head of Joseph, and upon the top of the head of him, that was separated from his brethren. His glory is like the firstling of his bullock, and his horns are like the horns of unicorns; with them he shall push the people together to the ends of the earth; and they are the ten thousands of Ephraim, and they are the thousands of Manasseh.*" DEUT. XXXIII. 13—17.

THIS blessing is an overflowing stream. Gift follows gift, as if beneficence left bounds behind. Treasures are scattered with unsparing hand. The grant seems, Take, till no more can be received.

Joseph is the tribe thus signally enriched. His name prepares us for a mantling cup. He sparkles as the brightest jewel of his father's house. His early grace—his persecuted youth—his rescue from the pit—his firm resistance of enticing evil—his prison-sufferings—his exaltation to be a prince in Egypt—his call to be a saviour to his house—with all the tender incidents of his affecting tale, are verdant spots in the first Bible-pages. He lived no common life. No common blessing passes to his seed.

While faith, too, journeys by his side from scene to scene—from early hatred till knees bowed before him—from the low dungeon to the lofty throne—it quickly sees a living type of Jesus. The varying lights and shadows graphically show the Lord. Hence it is no surprise, that special honours crown him. The lips of Jacob gave him an exceeding share. Gen. xlix. 22—26. The lips of Moses add new stores. It is meet, that they, who trace out most of Christ to men, should stand pre-eminent in heavenly favour. Hence Joseph enters on this goodly lot.

His character is first described. This claims, then, primary regard. It is a simple portrait. All is comprised in this one praise: he is the "separated from his brethren." He differs, and because he differs, he is cast out. He will not walk in evil ways. And evil men eschew him. He loathes their vices, and they loathe his grace. He cannot live, as one with them. And they conspire, that he shall live no more. But while the wicked frown, God smiles. While scales of enmity are full, the scales of recompensing favour far outweigh

Reader, while you survey this feature of God's child, ask, Is your likeness here? Forget not, that two families inhabit earth. In principle—in taste—in habit—in desire, they are as separate, as light from darkness—cold from heat—pole from pole—life from death. There is the serpent's seed. There is the heaven-born race. There is the world. There is the little flock of grace. There is the broad road. There is the narrow way. There are the sheep. There are the goats. Hence the importance of the question. Have you escaped from nature's thraldom? Do your feet tread the upward path of life? Do you belong to Belial, or to Christ?

Be wise, and ascertain your real position. Rest not a slave

among slaves—a worldling among worldlings. Tarry not in the doomed plain. Come out, like Joseph. He was separate. And did he lose thereby? Let his blessing now give reply.

The blessing is so worded, as to exhibit the fullest measure of earthly fertility. All causes, which concur to multiply and ripen fruits, shall lend their genial influence. The land shall blossom, as an Eden. The canopy of heaven shall pour down softening rains. The gentle dew shall ever sparkle in refreshing drops. Springs from beneath shall permeate the clods. The annual and the monthly produce shall periodically bloom. The ancient mountains shall supply their tribute. Their caverns shall be rich in ore. The lasting hills shall slope luxuriant in olives and in vines. Joseph shall know no scarcity or dearth. Its borders shall abound in "the precious things of the earth and the fulness thereof." The corn shall widely wave in golden wealth. The grass shall spread its verdant carpet. All cattle and all flocks shall browse. Thus earth shall bring her every treasure: and Joseph's son's shall feast at nature's overflowing board.

Such is the superficial view. Thus the first aspect shows abundance of terrestrial goods. But these strong images are bright with higher import.

Surely this is a vivid scene of better wealth. Our precious Bible—the book of every age and clime—often culls nature's field to impress spiritual ideas. Things visible portray invisible possessions. The principle leads us to look from the outward landscape, and to seek deeper lessons for the soul.

The parallel is quickly found. Obvious illustrations soon occur. For instance, the heart is often parched and dry. But Jesus can sweetly soften. "He shall come down like rain

upon the mown grass: as showers, that water the earth." Ps. lxxii. 6. Each morning opens on a scene of need. Each morning finds supplies. "I will be as the dew unto Israel." Hos. xiv. 5. The roots of grace are planted on a flinty soil. There must be constant nourishment, else the leaves wither. Fear not, believer, "Thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not." Is. lviii. 11. "He shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green, and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit." Jer. xvii. 8. The inner man, once rank with every noxious weed—where thorns and briers raised their fruitless heads—when cheered by heaven-sent rays, smiles as a garden, blossoms as a rose. The promise stands, "I will plant in the wilderness the cedar, the shittah-tree, and the myrtle, and the oil tree: I will set in the desert the fir-tree, and the pine, and the box-tree together." Is. xli. 19. Then precious crops of holy words, and holy works in due succession come. Then fruits of godliness ripen in turn. Faith stands a noble tree. Hope raises high its richly laden boughs. Love scatters fragrance all around. Clusters of righteousness bear witness, this is the vineyard of the Lord—the field watered by grace—filled with the Spirit's seed—and cherished by heaven's brightest beams.

Believer, turn not from this spiritual landscape, without the thought, Is your soul thus? The test of state is always one, "By their fruits ye shall know them." The word is true, "He that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit." John xv. 5. Do you thus abide in Christ: Do you draw fertilizing sap from that rich stem?

Do you sit ripening beneath the sunny smiles of God? So only can your heart be Joseph's fertile land.

Joseph has more than promise of this large prosperity. There is assurance of divine good will. This is his crowning blessing. He inherits "the good will of Him, that dwelt in the bush."

Observe, how Moses cherished to his latest hour that early revelation of his Lord. He can look back on much, and close, and dear communion: but that display is still most splendent in the retrospective view. No time can dim its lustre.

Believer, what can obscure on memory's mirror your first clear view of Jesus! What can deaden on your retentive ear the voice, which first assured you of His love! Your heaven began, when you had evidence of His good will. Cherish this sweet assurance. Open your eyes more clearly to discern it. Clasp tight your hands around it. Through every day—in every day's concerns—think, what high favour hovers round you! From all eternity good will regarded you. To all eternity it will warmly burn, and through all time it will remain your guard. It was good will to undertake your full redemption. It was good will to leave heaven's glories in your service. It was good will to live and die in your behalf. The low estate—the sufferings—the groans—the agony—the cross—the streaming blood—the death—the grave—all manifest good will. And now this favour enriches you with daily grace. It will not fail, while life endures. It will watch by your dying bed. It will receive your fleeting breath. It will present you faultless before the Father's throne. It will joy over you, while endless ages roll. Nothing can quench—nothing can part from—"the good will of Him that dwelt in the bush."

Joseph's blessing still flows on. Distinctive evidence, that he is the heir of good will, follows. Thus it abounds. "His glory is like the firstling of his bullock." He shall stand stately—beauteous—strong, as the prime offspring of the herd. He shall move the admiration of the plain.

Here, again, the deepest truth is spiritual. Where shall we find the glory of the human race? It can be only in the realms of grace. There is no comeliness in this world's slaves. They are polluted—tainted—marred by sin—crippled in power—impotent for good. But when the Spirit leads them to a Saviour's blood, and thus obliterates each filthy stain: when faith puts on the robes of divine righteousness: when power from heaven renews the nature: when they receive the lineaments of Christ: when they reflect the God-man's image; then strength and beauty succeed to weakness and deformity: then this grand pledge is fully redeemed: "His glory is like the firstling of his bullock." Deut. xxxiii. 17. It is ever true, that each Joseph is made strong in a Saviour's strength, and beauteous in a Saviour's beauty, and moves among his fellow-men, the salt of the earth, the light of the world.

Again, Joseph shall do valiantly. His prowess shall crush every foe. His conquering power is thus described: "His horns are like the horns of unicorns: with them he shall push the people together to the ends of the earth." Deut. xxxiii. 17.

Thus faith's life is one triumphant conflict. Who can recount the adversaries checking the upward march! But opposition is in vain. There is a Captain, who implants courage, girds up the loins, and cheers His followers onward, until the everlasting palms are waved, and everlasting hallelujahs sound. The blood-washed troops prevail, strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might.

Lastly, his numbers shall exceedingly expand. "They are the ten thousands of Ephraim, and they are the thousands of Manesseh." The child of God oft mourns his solitude. He seems the lonely cottage in the deserted vineyard. Is. i. 8. But when the total flock is gathered in—when the whole body is complete—when Jesus brings the collected sheaves to heaven's garner; then how vast will be the circle upon circle of saved souls; The ransomed multitude is numberless. The death of Jesus gives birth to countless life.

Reader, think of the world's tinselled gifts—weigh Satan's wages, as earned in time, and paid in the eternal world. Then turn and contrast the blessing, which "comes upon the head of Joseph—and upon the top of the head of him that was separated from his brethren." Shall this bright crown be yours? Jesu's hands bestow it. Seek it. Ask it. None seek—none ask—in vain.

Ah! wretched worldling, when will you be wise! Come and display your treasure. Your best is but a fading flower—a fleeting shadow—a tottering reed—a failing brook.—And how long can your hands retain it? How long!—You start. You tremble. You turn pale. How long! It perishes, while you strive to grasp. What will then follow! Hell is at hand to answer.

Happy Christian, show your treasure. You produce Joseph's portion—abundance of all grace. How long A bright eternity is the measure without measure.

THE UNITED TRIBES.

"*Rejoice, Zebulun, in thy going out: and Issachar in thy tents. They shall call the people unto the mountain: there they shall offer sacrifices of righteousness: for they shall suck of the abundance of the seas, and of treasures hid in the sand.* DEUT. xxxiii. 18, 19.

Two tribes come hand in hand. They are descendants of one mother, Leah: and they inherit neighbouring lots. Here they are colleagues in a common blessing: and drink, as fellows, of one enriching cup.

It is a lovely sight, when brothers are co-heirs of grace. The Gospel-records brighten with such pictures. Andrew and Simon are united by more than kindred-ties. John has a fellow-labourer in James, his parent's son. Jude, and the other James, born of one father, are new-born of one Spirit.

Do not these instances exhort each pious brother to seek especially a brother's good? Do not they bring the animating hope, that the door of success will open readily to such loving touch? Let then no gracious brother rest, while any son of the same mother treads the downward path. In prayer—by mild example—by winning counsels, let him persevere, till union be cemented in one centre—Christ. God wills the effort. Will He be slow to bless?

How great, too, is the gain! For where is treasure like a brother plucked from the quarry of the world, and placed a

jewel in the diadem of Christ! Sweet is the walk, when such move side by side to one eternal home.

Another thought stands at the threshold of this case. The younger ranks before the elder. This cannot be without design. The same occurs, when Jacob's dying lips address them. Zebulun precedes. Issachar, the first by birth, gives place Similarly Jacob's right hand rests on the younger, Ephraim. Manasseh has inferior honour. And other instances occur.

Reader, learn hence, that God sits supreme upon His throne. He holds a sceptre swayed in love—in wisdom—and in sovereign will. He raises one. He places others in a lower grade. Here showers of grace descend. Here the dew falls in tiny drops. We see the fact. We know, that there is purpose. But we trace not the origin of these decrees. In humble reverence we bow and we adore. All must be wise, and just, and right. The day draws near, when clearer light shall show consummate skill. The structure of the Church will then appear wondrous in perfection. Each part is fixed by an unerring hand.

Let us now heed the blessing. The first word sounds, "Rejoice." This ever is our Gospel's note. Joy is the gift, which Jesu's hands extend. This is the feast, to which true ministers invite.

When will a blinded world unlearn that silliest of fictions, that ways of faith are cheerlessness and gloom? Let faithless men be honest, and they must confess, that their career is restless care—keen disappointment—and self-wrought vexation. They pluck the thorn—not the flower. They feed on husks—not on rich fruit. Their cup is wormwood—not the vine's juice. Their present is distress—not peace. Their future is dismay—not hope. How different is the new-born

heart! There constant joy keeps court: joy in the Lord, who washes out all sin—who gives the key of heaven, and title-deeds of endless bliss, and earnest of a weight of glory, and strength for the journey, and triumph at the end. The mandate is not an unmeaning word, "Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say, Rejoice." Phil. iv. 4.

But Zebulun has his peculiar place: so, too, has Issachar. Their calling differs. Zebulun's line extends around the coast. His ships traverse the seas. His traffic is across the waves. While Issachar reposes in inland scenes: and dwells in meadows and in vales. His life is pastoral tranquility. But whether in turmoil or in peace, joy is the heritage of both. "Rejoice, Zebulun, in thy going out: and Issachar in thy tents."

They have the happy knowledge, that all their labours are in appointed course: they go out, or they tarry, under heavenly bidding, and therefore with glad hearts,

This leads us to observe, how varied are the grades of man's employ! How diverse are positions! Some reign in palaces—some toil in cots. Some feast at plenty's board—some pine in penury's contracted cells. Purple and splendour deck a Dives—Lazarus lies a beggar at the gate. Some work at looms—others in fields. Some climb the mast—others handle the spade. Some exercise the mental powers—others strain the muscles of the frame. Some soar in literature's highest flights—some crawl unlettered to the grave. Some guide a nation's counsels—others are instruments to execute these laws. Some are exalted to far higher work. They are ambassadors for Christ. Their office is to tell aloud His wondrous love—to rouse the slumbering—to feed Christ's flock—to uplift thoughts from earth—to spread soul-renovating

truths—to build up saints on their most holy faith. But perfect wisdom rules these varieties on life's stage. No being enters or recedes, but in accordance with God's will. He speaks—they live. He speaks—they die. Ingress and exit are in His hand. At His decree all kings, all beggars, breathe and expire. Both times and stations are allotted by His mind. He raises to the pinnacles of earth; or veils in seclusion. He leads to walks known and observed of all; or hides in garrets of obscurity. Let then the child of God move on, rejoicing in his day and lot. No change would be improvement. He best can serve his generation, and advance his soul-concerns, by working cheerfully in his assigned position.

Believer, when you distinctly see the beckoning cloud; when you set forth, or rest, submissive to clear guidance; banish fears—cast out all doubts—lift up the happy head—clap the exulting hands—rejoice—give thanks. A heavenly Father cannot set you in wrong place. A loving Saviour cannot lead you in wrong paths. A gracious Spirit cannot endow you with wrong gifts. All is well. Look up and follow, and, as you follow, sing, "Rejoice, Zebulun, in thy going out—and Issachar in thy tents."

Next, there is work, in which these tribes concur. They are described as zealous to bring others to know God: "They shall call the people unto the mountain—there they shall offer the sacrifices of righteousness." These words exhibit missionary features. We seem to see them mourning for ignorance, and longing to impart truth: hating darkness, and yearning to infuse light; loving the one true God, and ardent to call the wandering to His fold—the heavy laden to His rest—the worshippers of stocks and stones to Zion, the Gospel-mount.

Grace had made them to differ from the world around. Revelation had taught them the way of life. They had received Christ-shadowing ordinances. Their worship was not degraded rites of ignorance. Their altar and their victims were typal of the sin-removing Lamb. Their services were bright with God's own truth. Thus, with burning hearts, they called the people unto the mountain, where they offered the sacrifices of righteousness. They would not know, and love, and serve, alone.

Believer, catch hence a gale to fan the fire kindled in your soul. Each child of God—in heart—in lip—in life—should be a flame of enterprizing zeal. Is he enlightened—called—selected — converted — pardoned — comforted — sanctified — saved—only that self may live? Away with such unworthy thought. Let the low slaves of Satan, let poor paltry worldlings, shiver in the freezing atmosphere of self. Let their desires, with unplumed wing, hang heavily around their ease — their profit — their indulgence — their debasing lusts. But let faith soar in higher regions, and break forth in grander efforts, and spread in more ennobled work. Surely its sympathies should grasp the total family of man! Surely its love should travel round the circuit of the globe! Surely its cry should ever call poor sinners to the cross!

Awake, then, arouse; be up, be doing. What! shall souls perish, while you sleep? Shall hell enlarge its borders, while you loiter? Shall Satan push on his triumphs, and you look on indifferent? Shall superstition thrive, and you be silent? Shall ignorance grow darker, and you care not? Forbid it, every feeling of pity—tenderness—humanity—compassion. Forbid it, every thought of a soul's boundless worth. Forbid it, all the unutterable wonders wrapt in the name, eternity.

Forbid it, every pious wish to snatch immortals from undying woe—and to upraise them to undying bliss. Forbid it, all your love to Jesu's glorious name—all your deep debt to His atoning blood—all your delight in His appeasing cross. Forbid it, all your hope to see His face in peace—and sit beside Him on His throne—and ever bask in heaven's unclouded sunshine. Forbid it, your deliverance from hell—your title-deeds to heaven. Forbid it, your constant prayer, "Hallowed be Thy name—Thy kingdom come—Thy will be done." Forbid it, your allegiance to His rule—the statutes of His kingdom—the livery, which you wear. Forbid it, His awakening example—His solemn and most positive command. Forbid it, every motive, swelling in a Christian heart.

Up, then, and act. Soul-death meets you at each turn. The world in its vast wideness perishes untaught. The spacious fields are neither tilled nor sown. The many millions are heathen—and therefore rushing hell-ward. Help, then, the missionary cause. You may—you can—you should. The need is for men—for means. Can you go forth? Let conscience answer. If not, you yet can pray, and give. Write shame—write base ingratitude—write treason to Christ's cause on every day, which sees no effort from you for the heathen world.

Read not in vain how Zebulun and Issachar subserved this cause. They called the people to the mountain. They strove to increase the sacrifices of righteousness.

The blessing adds, "For they shall suck of the abundance of the seas, and of treasures hid in the sand." God will enrich them. Their traffic shall hive plenteous store. They trade for their God, and their trade shall be full wealth. Who ever lost, who worked for Him!

Remember, that all gain is gainless, if unconsecrated. The

worldling's bags have holes—his barns soon empty—his coffers have no locks. Treasure laid out for God is laid up in safe keeping.

Believer, come, then, restore to God what He entrusts to you. It will be paid back. But with what interest! God only knows. And on what day? When the returning Lord shall reckon—when the applauding voice shall say. "Well done, good and faithful servant: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." Matt. xxv. 21. But now you may have happy foretaste.

Will any put these humble lines aside, without much inward search? Let it not be so. Let every heart inquire, Lord, am I thine? Is my inheritance among Thy chosen flock? Do I lie down in their fair pastures? Do I draw water from their wells of life? Am I thy Zebulun—thine Issachar? Is my life a clear testimony, that I serve Christ? Do I show, that I am alive by many infallible proofs. Acts i. 3.

If not, oh! let the prayer be heard, Lord, make me Thine, and keep me thine for ever. If other lords have held me in their chains, may the vile bondage cease. Accept me, worthless as I am. "Draw me—we will run after Thee." Fit me—enable me—and my whole life shall be delighted service. Supply me with the oil of grace, and then the flame of glowing toil shall blaze. A Zebulun and Issachar in privilege will always be Zebulun and Issachar in zeal.

THE LION TRIBES.

"*Of Gad he said, Blessed be he, that enlargeth Gad: he dwelleth as a lion.*" "*And of Dan he said, Dan is a lion's whelp.*" DEUT. xxxiii. 20, 22.

OUR God omits no mode to impress holy lessons on His children's hearts. At one time simple precepts manifest His will: and plain injunctions guide to duty's path. Now, nature's volume lends similitudes. We learn to eschew evil—to seek ornaments of grace—from objects open to our sense.

There is much wisdom in this figurative teaching. It speaks a language known in every clime. It introduces thoughts alike familiar in the scholar's hall, and in the poor man's cot. It strikes a note, which every class, and state, and grade have ears to hear.

Examples throng the Bible-page. Thus lambs, which innocently sport, are chosen, as fit emblems of meek humility and gentle patience. The serpent's subtlety supplies the pattern of intelligence: "Be ye wise as serpents." The dove adjoins the model of sweet inoffensiveness: "And harmless as doves." The eagle's lofty flight teaches, how faith should soar on high: "They, that wait on the Lord, shall renew their strength: they shall mount up with wings, as eagles." Is. xl. 31. To inculcate courage, and a noble front, the Lion shows its form. And that the lesson should take deeper root,

two Tribes illustrate it. Gad "dwelleth as a Lion." "Dan is a Lion's whelp."

Believer, this picture has a voice—at all times needed—and not least so in our compromising day. Hear it. And may the mighty Spirit help you, while you listen, to put on strength, as a girdle, and courage, as an heroic panoply!

The Lion is the forest's king. He moves pre-eminent above all beasts. He is as monarch among lower tribes. Superiority is his conceded right.

Such is the Christian's stand among earth's sons. It is a mighty word: "He had made us kings and priests unto God and His Father." Rev. i. 6. It is a glorious title: "Ye are chosen generation—a royal priesthood." 1 Pet. ii. 9.

The mass of human race reach not this rank. They raise not this elevated brow. They show not this princely mien. Their tastes are grovelling and vile. They only care to sip the vulgar cup of time and sense. Their sin-soiled garments and polluted feet prove, that they wallow in defiling mire. Even liberty is unknown. The clash of heavy chains attests their bondage. Satan drags them—and they must obey. The world gives laws—they tremblingly submit. They crouch the slaves of many an insulting tyrant.

Believer, you only are the freedman of the Lord. You have found liberty in Christ. "If the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." John viii. 36. You serve a Prince, who calls His subjects to be kings. You are a royal citizen of heaven. Then live as heir of glory. Walk Lion-like in holy majesty of grace.

We thus are led to mark the glory of this kingly animal. It is his strength and courage.

1. Strength. His sinews are as iron. His limbs are braced

with might. All, who resist him, fall an easy prey. To him to fight is victory. Assailed, he vanquishes. Assailing, he subdues. Throughout the plain—the forest—and the hill, there is no power, which can match with his.

Here, again, is the believer's image. He is endued with inward prowess. But this is not poor nature's gift. All enter life alike—feeble in heart, in spirit, in resolve. All are the victims of an enervating sickness—sin. This plague weakens, as a palsy. It undermines the total fabric. The inner man, under its touch, is worthless, as a tottering reed—a broken bow—a quivering leaf—the empty chaff—the bubble's froth.

What has sin done? Ruin follows in its rear. Through it, the vessel, once so noble, crumbles as a wreck—the tree, once so stately, lies low—the fortress, once so strong, is robbed of gates—spoilers may enter—none drives them back.

Believer, I appeal to you. You alone are able to reply. Are these dark colours darker than the truth? Look back. Let unregenerate days tell their sad tale. What was your unconverted state? Had you ability to vanquish evil? Did you present indomitable front against the enemy's attacks? Did you stand firm, as adamantine rock, against the lashing surges of iniquity? Conscious memory and downcast shame confess, no strength was in you.

This is the common case throughout our race, until help comes from heaven. How easy is the proof! How sad! Take any worldling. A temptation meets him. A gilded bait allures. A sweet indulgence opens its inviting arms. What follows? The silly moth is caught. Pleasure whispers, Come and partake. Desire accedes. Nature surrenders. No godly principle forbids. Conscience is mute. Thus yielding frailty proves, how frail is man. Thus Satan leads his crowds down

misery's declivity. Quickly—easily—they glide along. The rolling pebble has no power to stop. The sinking vessel has no buoyancy to rise. The downhill torrent is incapable of turning.

Here is the one reply to the enquiry: Why is this world such a wide sea of evil? Why do earth's multitudes so roll to hell? Satan assails and wins. The weak heart weakly yields. The mind—the passions—lack firmness to resist. Thus the strong foe takes strengthless man a captive at his will.

Believer, I look again to you. Is such your present case? I mark the grateful adoration of your soul. I hear your praises swelling to the skies. I see your eye sparkling with thanksgiving love. You testify, Once I was feeble, as feebleness can be. Weakness is a weak description of my nothingness of power. But now I am made strong, and all my strength is in my Saviour's arms, and by my Saviour's side, and through my Saviour's help, and from my Saviour's Spirit. He now works with me—in me—for me. And so I work and prosper. He is my battle-axe—my bow—my spear—my sword. He nerves my loins. He fortifies my breast. He frames my armour, and He girds me with it. He bids me to go forward, and He Himself precedes. Thus my poor worm-like heart becomes in Christ a Lion. If I sink not—if I prevail—if I subdue—the power is His—the grace is His—to Him I give the praise, and on His brow I place my victor's crown.

But you deny not, that the fight continues to be very fierce. Temptations have not ceased to tempt. The world remains the world. Flesh still is flesh. Traitors still dwell within. Satan still hates. His wrath increases. With craftier wile

he marks his opportunities, and lays his snares. There is no day, when allurement spreads not some net. Woe would be yours, if Jesus were not ever near. But He is near, ministering real strength. Thus you hold on. Thus you hold out.

It is a miracle of grace, when thus the little flock gains trophies, "strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might." It is divine empowerment, when thus experience shouts, "I can do all things through Christ, which strengtheneth me." Aid from heaven is supplied, and then the old serpent flees. Victory comes, because the Lion of the tribe of Judah helps. Wonder of wonders! In Jesu's might, the weakest heart—the feeblest will—with Lion's strength, beats back all hell.

Believer, ever remember, then, where your true power lies. Take not one step, approach no work, except mailed in a Saviour's grace. Appalling instances record, how saints have stumbled, when they have ventured forth alone. Abraham quailed. Noah sinned foully. Jacob stooped to fraud. David tumbled into filthiest mire. Peter acted a dastard's part.

Seek not excuse for such vile falls in nature's frailty, or in evil's power. Nature is frail. Evil is mighty. But here is the fault. Faith did not grasp the ready sword. Prayer did not ask the ready aid. Learn from these instances to meet Goliath in the name of God. And then fear not. You will stand Lion-like in strength.

Does any poor sinner, pierced by many a wound—bemired by many a fall—tottering at each step beside a precipice's edge—read these lines? Sir, turn not from the encouragement of this Gospel-truth. You yet may obtain strength to trample down your perils and your foes. You live. Your many wounds have not brought death. In these present words

another warning meets you. Is not this the Saviour's call? Come, then, and join yourself to Him, and all His might is yours—and you will triumph with those, who, through His blood, have overcome. Cease to grovel a crushed worm. Become a Christian Lion.

2. Courage. Lions to their strength add courage. They never know timidity. Valiantly they face all danger. Intrepidly they rush to the attack. No multitude of beasts or men alarm them. As power is in their limbs, so bravery fills their hearts.

This quality again portrays the child of God. When heavenly commands are clear, unflinchingly he obeys. He confers not with flesh and blood. Despite all threats, he steadfastly advances. His only fear is, lest he should fear. He only trembles, lest he should tremble.

See the three captive youths. The tyrant menaced. They stood alone against an empire. What, shall they yield? Nay, rather, welcome the furnace—the agony—the flame. They failed not God. God failed not them. He made them bold as Lions. And their fame lives among faith's heroes.

See Daniel. Command is urgent. Shall his knees leave their loved employ! Shall he address a worm, though king, in prayer! The thought is keener torture, than the Lion's teeth. With open window bravely he worships. His courage conquers. The lions' mouths are closed. The tyrant's heart is turned.

See, too, the Baptist. He fears not Herod's might. Fearlessly he drags to light the darling sin. He chooses truth and prison, rather than unfaithfulness and ease. Where he sees error, there his mouth is open to reprove.

Believer, let it be so with you. What though falsehood's

guise be specious—and high authority endorse it—and brilliant gifts commend it—and pliant worldlings fondle it—and gilded honours follow in its rear—if the cup hold one poison drop—if statements swerve one hair-breath from Gospel verity, then, with Lion valour let your voice scare the traitor. Thus Paul resisted Peter to the face.

So, too, courageously confess Christ. This often needs a martyr's spirit. When friends desert—and the world sneers—and blight descends on prospects—and Gospel-truth seems linked with trouble—it needs a Lion's heart to testify, None but Jesus—none but Jesus. But thus the Apostles menaced with near death, preached Christ more fully and more clearly. Their hearts were faith. Their faith was courage. Their courage was success.

A noble army of confessing saints beckon us onward in this path. Ignatius moved with a Lion's heart to meet his grave in lion's jaws. May his bold words be cherished while the world endures. "Now do I begin to be a disciple of my Master Christ." Luther stands with Lion's courage re-echoing Paul's resolve. "None of these things move me." In this grand spirit he exclaimed, Though there were devils many as the tiles on the roofs of Worms, I shall go forward.

Come, then, believer, be you, too, as a Lion for your Lord. Boldly devise great plans. Heroically act them out. Let neither earth nor hell intimidate. Your cause is good. Your call is from God's throne. Your help is sure. What promises encourage! What triumphs are at hand! Only be thou very courageous. Be not a coward in the camp of Christ: for Judah's Lion expects Lion-followers.

Gad dwelleth as a Lion. Dan is a Lion's whelp. Will you be less?

THE LAST TRIBES.

"*Of Naphtali he said, O Naphtali, satisfied with favour, and full with the blessing of the Lord, possess thou the west and the south. And of Asher he said, Let Asher be blessed with children; let him be acceptable to his brethren; and let him dip his foot in oil. Thy shoes shall be iron and brass; and as thy days, so shall thy strength be.*" DEUT. xxxiii. 23—25.

NAPHTALI and Asher now appear. They are the last in order—not the least in favour. Their blessing proves again the truth oft stated, that the treasury of God is a vast mine. It bestows much: but much ever remains. The sun has poured down floods of rays on a long train of generations, but the streams cease not—the fountain is not impoverished. The elders of faith's house have been most plenteously enriched, but we may still as plenteously obtain. Store upon store—wealth upon wealth—grace upon grace—still fill the heavenly coffers. There is no end, no limit. Full hands are ever open to dispense. Abundant gifts in ages past still leave abundant gifts for present and for future days.

My soul, if you are poor, it is not because God's blessings fail. Let faith not cease to bring its empty vessels, they will not cease to be supplied. "He giveth more grace." Jam. iv. 6.

Mark, how Naphtali's rich portion confirms this. This tribe is "satisfied with favour, and full with the blessing of

the Lord." Possession of the west and south is also granted. Their lot is fixed in fertile and salubrious spots. The goodly fruits, which crowned their baskets—the choice position of their lands—their sheltered vales—their inland sea, fulfilled this promise. Nurtured in nature's richest lap, they revelled in favour and in blessings.

But the possession thus granted seems to hint at nobler gain. When Jesus put on our flesh, and trod our earth, this tribe was chosen as His frequented home. Here stood Capernaum—the scene of His most mighty works. Here He displayed the brightness of those glorious deeds, which testified divine commission. Here the God-man moved—healing disease—allaying pain—soothing deep misery—reviving drooping hearts—uttering pure wisdom—fulfilling the long line of prophecy—lifting high the Gospel beacon. This was surpassing honour. This was privilege exalting to the very heavens. "O Naphtali, satisfied with favour, and full with the blessing of the Lord," your eyes were privileged to see incarnate Deity.

Believer, come now and trace in Naphtali's distinguished lot the features of your happy case. Is not this picture drawn, that you may realize your plenteous treasures? You, too, are "satisfied with favour." You, too, are "full with the blessing of the Lord."

"Satisfied with favour." You once were dead in trespasses and sins. You moved a living carcase with a lifeless soul. Your every step was hellward. Your every moment hurried you towards endless woe. Your life was ignorance—rebellion—slavery—disgrace. But now the darkness is dispersed, and true light shines. You see the cross. You use the blood. You stand in a new world of spiritual delight. You are a new creation of thought—affection—hope—desire. You live

for God—to God—with God—in God. But whence the change? Did it result from nature and your own resolve? Did rolling years beget this wisdom? Oh! no. You owe the whole to sovereign grace. God, of his own free will, looked down with favour on your ruined soul. His favour gave you, as a jewel, to His Son: and gave His Son to be your uttermost salvation. His favour sent the Spirit to make you one, by faith, with Christ. Thus all things are yours. Child of grace, do you not rapturously sing, I am indeed a Naphtali, "Satisfied with favour!"

"Full," too, "with the blessing of the Lord." Happy state! The Father ever lives to bless. Jesus ever reigns to bless. The Spirit ever works to bless. The morning dawns, that blessings may descend. The day goes on, that blessings may proceed. The clouds, which seem to portend storms, bring showers of blessing. Life is a blessing, while it lasts. Death is a blessing, when it comes. Trials—afflictions—losses—temptations—are blessings, because they wean from earth. When time is left behind, and eternity reviews life's journey; then will the truth stand prominently out, that each saint's cup was "full with the blessing of the Lord."

But Naphtali's distinction was, that Jesus chose it as His earthly dwelling. Believer, have not you similar delight? Your soul is Jesu's home. He, whom no heavens can hold—He, to whom infinity is a mere speck—scorns not to abide within you. "I am come into my garden, my sister, my spouse." You may always realize His present smile. You may always hold sweet converse. You may ever whisper to His ready ear, and catch the joy of His replying voice. You may always lean upon His arm, and rest upon His breast Christ dwells in your heart by faith.

Moses looks on from Naphtali to Asher. His is the final blessing. It is largely bounteous. It seals again the truth, that God delights to scatter favours with unsparing hand. It has a voice still calling believers to a treasure-house, where they may ask with open mouth, and take with open hand.

"Let Asher be blessed with children—let him be acceptable to his brethren—and let him dip his foot in oil. Thy shoes shall be in iron and brass—and as thy days, so shall thy strength be." Deut. xxxiii. 25.

Out of this crowded diadem only the last sparkling gem can be examined. But is it not a jewel far exceeding this world's boasted wealth! "As thy days, so shall thy strength be." This promise intimates the fact, that days will vary. As in nature clouds skreen the sun—and storms descend—and tempests rage—and hurricanes sweep fearfully—and rapid changes come—so is it in the life of grace. The morning brightness oft gives way to mid-day gloom. The mid-day gloom brings in evening wildness. The firmament is now serene—we look above on one expanse of clearest blue: now the scene varies, and thick darkness frowns, or forked lightning darts its angry shafts. Faith has no lofty seat, which trials cannot reach—and no seclusion, which distress cannot invade. But it has a rock, from which no foes can shake—the rock is Asher's blessing, "As thy days, so shall thy strength be."

Strong in this pledge—bold in this might—safe in this safety—confident in this security—impregnable within this fort—happy in this happiness, faith feels, I shall not be injured or destroyed. Days may be dark and sad; I may be sorely buffeted; but strength shall be enough. All earthly props may fall, but I shall stand. All human friends may

flee, but I shall not be left alone. All trials may in turn assail, but they shall not prevail. Satan may hurl each dart, but a strong shield shall ward them off. All snares may be most craftily laid, but they shall not destructively entangle. The world may use its every enticing art, but I shall be enabled to escape. It may mutter its threats, but I have a sufficient refuge. I may be tempted—persecuted—wronged—but not cast down. I oft may fear. I oft may see a yawning precipice before my feet. The ground may tremble. But I am safe. I hold a saving promise: "As thy days, so shall thy strength be."

Faith can fly back, and commune with the elder saints. It hears from all the self-same story We had a course through stormy seas, where billows tossed, and rocks were sharp, and quicksands opened their engulphing jaws. But our barks rode triumphant to the haven. As our days, so was our strength.

Jacob speaks of an outcast life—and many enemies—and overwhelming griefs—and lonely tremblings—and inward fears—but still strength was built up. He held on to the end. He testifies, The Angel redeemed me from all evil. David presents a painful chart. What cruel hate of men! what thirstings for his blood! what foul assaults of Satan! what stumbles! ah! what falls! His soul-life oft seemed trodden in the dust. But he revives. Oil of grace supplies the flickering lamp. The heaven-lit flame never expires. Others are bound, and dragged to torturing flames; but they survive. The menace cannot overcome. The fire cannot consume. Their day is very terrible, but strength endures. Others are cast a prey to angry beasts, but their peace is as a placid lake. The outward scene is wild affright, but their souls never quake. The Lord is with them, and their strength abides.

View Paul and Silas in the inmost cell. Their wounds are smarting—the dungeon is deep—the chains clash heavily. But inward comfort flows in full tide. Thanksgivings swell. They loudly sing, and bless a loving God.

Mark the heroic calmness of the early preachers of the faith. Threats and imprisonment are their lot. They feel, as men; but they rejoice as saints. They neither faint nor fail. They sit unmoved amid an earthquake of alarms. As their days, so is their strength. It is Paul's glad acknowledgment—but not Paul's sole experience—"Sorrowful, yet alway rejoicing." "I can do all things through Christ, that strengtheneth me." Martyrs and confessors press forward to give like witness. They joy in anguish—they embrace the stake—they hug encircling flames. They find, that days are often terrible, but never without needful strength. Was Stephen left without support, when, with angelic look, he kneeled down, and praying for his murderers, amid a shower of stones, fell tranquilly asleep?

The whole bright throng around the throne attest the same. They passed through many perils — sorrows — fights — but heavenly strength braced their loins—sustained their hearts—fanned their desponding spirits—and made them more than conquerors. From every lip one testimony sounds. The word is true, "As thy days, so shall thy strength be."

Believer, tremble not. Take courage. Go forward. You may be young, and a long course may open to your view. Foes must infest you. You have no promise, that trials will not come. Satan spares none. He grants no Sabbath of repose. But face the worst, bold and serene in Christ. Hold fast the staff of grace. Trust and fear not. Trust and pray always. Trust and plead this word. It is not Asher's only.

It is your portion. You will surely find, "As thy days, so shall thy strength be."

You may be worn with malady, and tottering down the vale of years. You may dread Jordan's waves, and the cold touch of death. But clasp the promise. The greater need brings the more large support. How many tremblers have gone triumphantly to rest! Christ's love exceeds all hopes. His merciful fulfilments surpass each pledge. He cannot fail. He cannot disappoint. Come what may—this will be true, "As thy days, so shall thy strength be."

But faithfulness must add, that these rich mercies are Israel's portion only? They, who are Christ's, possess, and claim, and use, and joy in them. They, who reject Him, see but a casket, which they open not. Their days have trouble without strength. Their future will have misery without end. Let not such turn from Naphtali and Asher until they share what Naphtali and Asher gained from God. The blessings of these tribes may yet, through grace, be sought and found.

Eternal Spirit, mighty source of light and inward life, vouchsafe Thy help! Open each eye to see the beauty, riches, blessedness, and glory of God's heritage. Stir up each heart to wrestle, till the word is heard: "Great is thy faith, be it unto thee, even as thou wilt."

ISRAEL'S GOD.

"*There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun.*" DEUT. xxxiii. 26.

THIS is the fervid exclamation of a soul acquainted with its God. The tongue would adequately praise, but language fails. Struggling efforts cannot do more than say, There is none like unto Him.

For one moment strive to estimate the worth of this attainment. Other knowledge is but darkness beside this light. All discoveries of art and science are mean as dust contrasted with this pearl. Let the expanded intellect take wing, and soar through all the firmament above. Let the celestial orbs be counted in their course. Let the earth's depths be traced. Let hidden wonders be brought forth to view. Let history tell the annals of the past. Let literature spread her storied page. Let keen investigation scrutinize the intricate machinery of the human heart. When all is learned, which mental power has ever grasped, what is the total worth, compared with the understanding of our God!

Other knowledge vanishes with time—and time is but a tiny speck. This knowledge is ever growing through eternity. It has an endless life. Other acquirements bring no inward peace, and heal no conscience-wounds, and gladden no dying beds. This removes every fear and spreads a holy calm. As is the value of the soul saved, such is the value of God truly known.

Reader, as you would live in bliss for ever, obtain, then, this prize. But search for it aright. God is revealed. He may be seen. But only in the Gospel-mirror, and in the face of Christ. Here only the concealing curtains are withdrawn. Here only can distinct display be found. But here the sun shines forth in perfect beauty and unclouded glory. Here every attribute appears in proper place, in just proportion, in blended harmony. The cross is the truth-showing text-book. Come then to it. The Spirit helping, while you gaze, you will take up the song, "There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun."

Look up—behold the wondrous testimony. First, characters of glowing light announce—"God is love." This is a truth established only here. Read through creation's volume. Evidence, indeed, of mighty wisdom and preserving care abounds. Elaborate effects prove the consummate skill of the contriving cause. Arrangements to promote happiness are clearly, largely, and benevolently made. But this fair picture has a reverse. Hurricanes and tempests sweep the earth. The storm destroys. The pestilence extends its desolating scythe. Disease preys almost upon every frame. We pity the feeble limb—the moody wanderings of unsound thought—the sorrowing parent—the bereaved child—the mourning widow. We turn from tears, and misery, and crime, and ask with a disquiet sigh, Are these the orderings of perfect love?

Approach the page of providence. It is a wheel moved by an unseen hand. Its constant motion asserts constant agency. But its results perplex and puzzle. To-day events cause happiness to overflow. To-morrow witnesses a flood of woe—affliction—loss—distress. We doubt—we hesitate—we cannot surely say, This ruling power is love.

We hear the proclamation of God's law. We listen eagerly. But awe and terror meet us. It speaks, indeed. But all is the sternness of inflexible decree. Give unimpaired obedience. Bring righteousness without one flaw—one speck—one stain. Show a whole course of strict compliance with strict terms. Then life eternal is secured. But if there be transgression—then take the curse, and perish everlastingly; for heaven's doors are closed, and wrath is the fixed penalty. Offence must reap its wages, where pardon never comes, and fires never quench, and anguish never ceases. What child of Adam's blinded race can commune with the law, and thence conclude, that God is love?

Now place beside these doubts the exhibitions of the cross. There God surrenders His own Son to shame—to agony—to death. He lays on Him the crushing burden of His people's sins. He puts a cup of infinite woe into those blameless hands. He bruises the innocent, that He may spare the transgressor. He slays the guiltless, that He may release the guilty.

O my soul, gaze on this fact. Feast on its consolations. Mark well its story. You need not die, for Jesus dies. You may escape hell-pains. A proxy suffers in your place. No punishment remains. The storm breaks on a substituted head. The vials holds no wrath for you. Your gracious Lord exhausts each drop. But this Saviour—so sufficient—so complete, is God's free gift. What, then, is this giving God? Surely you shout, He is perfect love. The cross unravels every doubt. "There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun."

Again, mercy is a sparkling attribute. God is rich in mercy. His ever-during mercy reaches unto the heavens. But where is the proof? We find it at Calvary. For what is mercy, but

tender love commiserating misery, and longing to bring ease? And is not this the trumpet-language of the cross? Christ thus expiring is surest evidence, that God's heart yearns to relieve wretchedness—to chase unhappiness away—to introduce delight and peace.

God also reigns upon a throne of grace. But the cross alone establishes this truth. For what is grace, but love looking with favour on immeritable worms—on lost ones, whose whole desert is punishment—on criminals, whose silent lips can urge no plea—whose downcast heads confess deep guilt. Grace finds at Calvary an open door, and free opportunity to enter on this noble work. There it pardons, and receives, and saves, and snatches from hell the rebels, who are nothing but iniquity. Faith sees this clearly in the wounded Jesus, and cries, God is all grace. "There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun."

Is justice God's essence? Is it so interwoven with His being, that God unjust cannot be very God? Now justice sternly asks, that every debt be fully paid, and no demand be set aside? The cross shows God in all the majesty of unsullied justice—in severity, which yields no right. He there exacts each due. The sad transgressions of the chosen race are countless in number—boundless in magnitude. Each is an incalculable debt. Before the cross the scales are brought; and a Substitute appears, who more than satisfies. He is supremely able, for He is divine. He pays a death, in value, far exceeding thought. Justice cries, Enough, I am content—Enough, the whole is paid—Enough, no shadow of a claim remains—Enough, the score is all wiped out.

Sinner, you cannot enter heaven, if you retain one sin unexpiated. Justice immovably forbids, and rightly bars the gates.

Believer, no charge remains against you, because your Surety has infinitely paid. If through Eternal ages you had lain in hell, you might have been for ever lessening a mass for ever great. Jesus by His one offering clears all away. Now Justice has become your ablest advocate. That attribute, once so severely adverse, stands your prevailing friend. God is just, and you are justified. Faith reads a full receipt in Jesu's pierced hands, and intelligently joins in the song, "There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun."

Holiness, too, is a main pillar of God's government. Unholiness in Him would overthrow the throne of righteousness, and lower heaven to hell. But holiness abhors all evil. It cannot look upon an unclean thing. It frowns iniquity to boundless distance. The impure cannot face it. Where, then, can the sinner hide? His stains exclude him from the sight of God. If he should venture near, a holy voice is heard, "Bind him hand and foot, and cast him into outer darkness." But at the cross our God is holy, and the sinner saved.

How can it be? Behold the problem solved. Sin is the dire offence. Let sin but vanish, and holiness is no longer hostile. Its opposition ceases. But the all-cleansing blood from Jesu's wounds obliterates each mark of guilt. It changes filth to loveliness—deformity to beauty—impurity to snow-bright lustre. Holiness beholds the blood-washed multitude. It finds no speck in them. Therefore it gladly clasps them to its pleased embrace. At the cross, this holiness, without receding from its loftiest ground, smiles on transgressors, and welcomes them to God's all-righteous throne. This is one of Calvary's wonders. Faith clearly sees it—and exults: "There is none like unto the God of Jsehurun."

Moreover, God must be absolutely true. His word cannot

be shaken. Now truth has clearly spoken. Its edict raises a gigantic prison round the sons of guilt. Its sentence links them to eternal death. How then can they escape, who thus are doomed? Come to the cross and witness. Jesus presents Himself. He asks, O truth, what is your claim? The answer is distinct. Whatever my lips have uttered, without one slightest failure, must be done. All, who have sinned, must take the death denounced. Jesus complies. He lays down life for each of His redeemed. In Him His seed all undergo the uttermost of truth's threat. No tittle is relaxed. Truth remains true, and a vast multitude ascend to heaven. The cross thus magnifies this attribute. Faith knows this, and again exclaims, "There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun."

Another scroll surmounts the cross. It writes the praise of everlasting wisdom. If any ask, where is wisdom's greatest work; let him come here and read a scheme, which reconciles seeming impossibilities. There was a task, before which all created minds could not but hide their baffled heads. Mercy asks pardon. Justice demands payment. Grace sues for life. Truth must have death. Love must admit. Righteousness excludes. But God appears, leading His Son to the accursed tree—and all are satisfied—delighted—honoured—magnified—exalted—glorified. Not one is tarnished—not one is set aside. Here is the brightest blaze of wisdom. The word is true, Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God. 1 Cor. i. 24. Again faith shouts, "There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun."

The real believer adds his individual praise. He can bear witness, how this incomparable God has sent His Spirit to add personal experience of these truths. He can record, This God was once unknown by me. I lived without Him in the

world. But now the mists are gone. I see Him saving even me in Christ. I claim Him, as my own. He is my Father. He has brought me to His home—the bosom of His love. I find Him to be all, that Scripture states, and glowing saints relate, and my enormous need requires. I find Him to be more. For words from angel's lips cannot mete half that sea of grace, on which I float to glory. And now my straining effort is, to learn more and more. With this desire I meditate and pray at Calvary. The more I see, the more I love. The more I love, the more I praise. The more I praise, the more my heart expands. The more my heart expands, the greater is my peace and joy. "There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun." How precious is this sight of faith! How precious will be the sight in heaven!

Happy the soul, whose glad experience thus responds, "There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun." Reader, is this blessedness your own? Be well assured, that life is a poor blank, until you know the peerless God. Let this study be your chief concern. The Spirit waits to reveal Jesus: and in revealing Jesus, to show Jeshurun's non-such God. Be not destroyed for lack of saving knowledge. Be not blind amid abounding light.

GOD'S ISRAEL

"Happy art thou, O Israel; who is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord, the shield of thy help, and who is the sword of thy excellency! and thine enemies shall be found liars unto thee; and thou shalt tread upon their high places." DEUT. xxxiii. 29.

MOSES thus speaks: and then on earth his lips for ever close! Just as his spirit spreads enraptured wings—just as he enters into perfect light—he seems to pause, and take a farewell view of Israel's camp. He now must leave the flock, for which he long had watched—the vineyard, in which he long had toiled—the children dearer than his very life. But he well knows, that they are God's especial care—loved above all nations of the earth—bound in the bundle of distinguishing grace. Hence, joying in their joy, and fervent in their hopes, he cannot check his overflowing heart. His spirit thus finds vent, "Happy art thou, O Israel: who is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord: the shield of thy help, and who is the sword of thy excellency! and thine enemies shall be found liars unto thee; and thou shalt tread upon their high places."

These precious words are obviously, in their first sense, the portion of those tribes, whose feet now stand on Canaan's confines. But the treasure is not theirs exclusively. Such thought is far too narrow. Here is each true believer's lot. This heritage descends to all faith's sons. It may be claimed by all, who to the end of time, trust in Christ Jesus—bathe in

His blood—put on His righteousness—and are the temple of His Spirit. Happiness—perfect—heaven-born—heaven-sent—is their sure property. Here are the pastures, in which they all are privileged to feed. Happy art thou, O child of God, who is like unto thee!

Believer, you, then, are invited to draw out the fragrance, which these delicious flowers present, and to luxuriate in these pastures of delight.

What is the first element of this happiness? What is the richest savour in this cup? What is the sweetest music in this note? What is the brightest jewel in this crown? It is salvation—salvation realized. "Who is like unto thee, O people saved." Saved—so that sin can no more injure, and self no more destroy, and Satan no more claim: saved, so that soul-misery is infinitely distant: saved, so that God is your Father—heaven is your home—a throne of glory is your high seat—and hallelujahs are your eternal song. Is not this happiness? This joy at once uplifts from earth. Let clouds of trial gather: let billows of affliction toss: let persecution, threats, and sneers assail: the heart, which clasps assurance of salvation, sits high above all nether trouble. There is no darkness, where this true light shines. "Happy art thou, O Israel, who is like unto thee, O people saved!"

But assurance of salvation is not firm, unless it rests upon a mighty rock. This rock is here displayed. It is the Lord—the Lord Himself. It is Jehovah, strong in omnipotence: "Saved by the Lord!"

Mark well, salvation is the Father's will. He writes the book of life. He frames the covenant of grace. He cannot change. He cannot be diverted from His plans. None can obliterate His fixed decrees. They must be saved, for

whom He purposes salvation. Saved by the Father is sure salvation.

Mark next, salvation is the work of Jesus. He comes, able and qualified to save to the uttermost. He rescues captive souls from Satan's grasp. By His blood He puts out the penal flames. By His strength He shivers every fetter. By His own right hand He tears down the gates of hell—and clears away all hindrance. He sends His angels to be guards. He causes all revolving providences to bring good. He never leaves His happy flock, until the crown is won. They must be saved, for whom He thus works out salvation. Saved by Christ is sure salvation.

"Saved by the Lord." No man could help himself. United companies could bring no aid. The hosts of the angelic world are vain to take away one sin. Jesus alone is able to achieve such work. Alone He undertakes. Alone He consummates. Alone He finishes. Thus the true Israel is "Saved by the Lord."

The eternal Spirit speeds on the wings of love to lend His aid. He opens blinded eyes to see the glories of the cross. He shows the grace and beauty of the dying Lamb. He melts the stony heart to love the precious Lord. He makes the sinner one with Christ by faith, and so an heir of God. Saved by the Spirit is sure salvation.

This salvation, then, is a sure Rock. Its summit towers above the heaven of heavens. Its deep foundations cannot be uprooted. It stands secure—complete—immovable. Nothing can detract from it. More cannot be added. He must be happy, then, whose feet are set upon this stable ground. The word is brightly true. "Happy art thou, O Israel, who is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord!

But perhaps a sigh is heard, Will not mighty foes strive to

destroy this happiness? Foes, indeed, are strong and many. There is Satan, hating with terrific hate, and aided with the countless troops of hell. He comes on, armed with tremendous weapons, each barbed with venom, each directed with consummate skill, each urged with superhuman force. Can he be happy, who hourly stands in such a fight?

There is the world, too, now smiling with seducing arts, now bitter in sarcastic sneers, now menacing with poverty, contempt, disgrace, and countless ills.

The flesh, too, is a restless plague—an Achan in the camp—a viper nurtured in the breast—a traitor hid in the recesses of the heart, ever willing to betray—ever ready to suck life-blood. There must be danger in such a combat-field: and danger disturbs happiness.

But what, if the defence is so impenetrable—so wide—so near—that none of these attacks can prosper? What, if a covering shield averts each point? Then the calm warrior will dwell in blissful peace, fearless of real hurt.

Now view the fact. Is not a shield prepared for every child of faith? And that shield, is it not the Lord Himself? Yes, the word loudly sounds: He is "The shield of thy help." He skreens. He shelters. He protects. He keeps unharmed, uninjured, and unwounded. Adversaries, therefore, must be infinite in number, more than omnipotent in strength, before they can prevail.

Believer, realize this sure defence. Go forth, brave to encounter every conflict. Shielded by God, you are as safe, as if the heaven of heavens were your covert. Behind this panoply you may smile at the battering rage of the incessant shower, and sing: Happy am I, saved of the Lord, who is the shield of my help!

But Zion's warriors are not happy in security alone. They covet trophies. Laurels must crown their brow. Now to be conquerors they need offensive weapons. They must give wounds, and smite, and overthrow. Their hands must wield a sword.

Happy believer! as you have God for a shield, so too, a sword is sharpened for your use. It is not of the earth. It is framed by no human skill. It is from heaven. Therefore it is resistless. It is the Lord Himself. Therefore it is all-conquering. He is "the sword of thine excellency." Know then your power. Face each opponent. Advance to the assault. Deal heavy blows. Spare not. The mighty God strikes with your arm. And when He strikes, each giant-adversary must fall low.

Happy art thou, so skreened! Happy art thou, so equipped for victories! What, though hell's troops move on, proud in their boastings, swelling in wrathful words of menace! It is added, "They shall be found liars unto thee." Their arrogance shall be, as empty bubbles. Their vaunting pride shall pass, as the passing wind. Their threats shall vanish, as the smoke. They may accuse—they may insinuate a host of doubts—they may suggest, that God will fail, and your soul perish, ere the conflict end. But these vile whisperings are false. The fight will gloriously end. Your feet shall crush their necks. The Spirit of truth, by Moses' lips, sounds these grand words: "Thine enemies shall be found liars unto thee, and thou shalt tread upon their high places."

Reader, I trust, that you now are well taught, where happiness alone can dwell. Its home is with God's Israel. It is the portion of the chosen race. It is the heritage of those, who know and love the Lord. Under the shelter of His

wings, His people rest encircled with these joys. Let such open their eyes to view their happy state. Let them receive with faith the countless pledges of their God. Is it not said, "He, that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things!" Rom. viii. 32. Is it not said, "All things are yours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come, all are yours, and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's." 1 Cor. iii. 21—23. Is it not said, "The ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs, and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness: and sorrow and sighing shall flee away." Is. xxxv. 10. Only believe, and become happy in this happiness. "Happy art thou, O Israel." Only believe, and rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory. Faith ever sings, and happy is its song.

Reader, this tract would fain detain you, while it makes a final effort to impress your heart. Pause, then, and say, is happiness your lot? Do you arise with morning light to joy? Do you move joyously throughout the day? Is joy the hand, which bolts your evening door? Your head hangs down. A sigh tells a sad tale. Your feet have not attained this happy ground. How is it? You have sought happiness, but you have sought it, where it never grows. The world, perhaps, enticed you. It showed a panoramic view of glittering honours—tinsel wealth—vain titles—empty bubbles of applause—and fading flowers of visionary peace. You toiled long in the pursuit; and now, wearied—worn-out—desponding, you confess, the world has been a miserable cheat.

Perhaps a more refined bait has allured. Perhaps science and literature's page have courted. For a while you have

found interesting converse with brilliant thoughts, and lofty flights of intellect. But still you are not happy. There is a void. There is distress. Conscience is restless and disturbed. The heart finds no repose on such a pillow. The bark cannot cast anchor on such sand. "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity, and vexation of spirit." Alas! you are not happy.

Know, then, you never can be, while apart from God. Listen. Turn not away. Cast not aside these lines. Is it too late? You live. Jesus still lives. The living word still cries, "Come unto Me, and I will give you rest." Be, then, persuaded. Approach the cross on bended knees—with suppliant lip—in deep humility—with earnest prayer. Confess your need. Avow your willingness to be Christ's. Place your whole soul and heart in His redeeming hands. Wrestle with Him. Let Him not go, until your burdens fall, and peace swells like a rising tide. He can bring back to God. He can assure of pardon. He can reveal His pierced hadns and side. He can bestow the title-deeds of life. He can admit you, as an adopted child, to the high family of grace. Then you will fully feel, how true are Moses' last words, "Happy art thou, O Israel; who is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord, the shield of thy help, and who is the sword of thy excellency! and thine enemies shall be found liars unto thee; and thou shalt tread upon their high places."

Holy Spirit, use these humble lines as seed of happiness, now and ever, to each reader's soul!

PISGAH.

"*Moses went up from the plains of Moab unto the mountain of Nebo, to the top of Pisgah.*" DEUT. xxxiv. 1.

PISGAH is crowded with instructive thoughts. The scene is solemn, because death appears, and a wondrous life finds here a wondrous end. It is holy, for God Himself attends the dying saint, and closes the dying eyes. But its main interest is the marvel of the distant prospects thence discerned. Moses ascends the mount. God meets His faithful servant. All the beauties of the promised land are spread, as a map, before him. And then he was translated to the heavenly reality. What annals record similar events!

My soul, with reverence open this treasure house of profit. Great Spirit of all light descend, for without Thy rays, even Pisgah must be dark!

Moses lived long. He passed a spacious sea of trial. He trod a tedious course of trouble. His sighs were many. His spirit was oft pained. But the last step came, and landed him in glory.

Believer, mark this, and gird up your loins. You, too, may experience a stormy voyage through many billows. But each wave wafts you nearer to your haven. The last will break—soon—very soon. And then, where will your sufferings be? Behind—immeasurably distant. What will be around—before

you? Peace—joy—glory. Live, then, assured, that the end approaches. The hope of rest makes all disquietudes to fade away. Burdens seem light, when borne for a brief space. Earth's longest sorrow cannot be long.

Moses goes up with ready step to die. God cheers him with an outspread prospect. With telescopic glance he is enabled to survey all the extent of Canaan's lovely land. "And the Lord said unto him, This is the land, which I sware unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, saying, I will give it unto thy seed. I have caused thee to see it with thine eyes, but thou shalt not go over thither." Deut. xxxiv. 4.

As we thus read, two thoughts arise.

1. God's promises are stable as Himself. His word must be. He said, "I will give it:" and hands now take the gift.

Believer, watch against unbelief. Hew it to pieces. Tread it to powder. Give it to the winds. Let no shred survive. It is shame, and it is folly. It mars your peace. It keeps out floods of joy. Place your foot firmly on the Word, and rise above all doubts. God's promise, surely, steadily advances towards fulfilment, as the sun to its appointed rising.

Add Pisgah to the many proofs. The goodly land, so often pledged, lies at its base. The happy tribes now reach their lots. So, too, a rest is promised to the saints of God. There was no failure to Israel. There will be no failure unto us. Jesus has entered as the forerunner. He holds possession in His people's name. The keys are in His hands. He beckons forward. He soon will give the welcome. The prize is sure to faith.

2. But Moses may not cross the borders. Wherefore? Thoughts of the heritage had often cheered his heart. His mind with eager wing had often speeded towards this Canaan.

It would have been sweet joy to have reposed, after long journeyings, in this land. His lips would have been loud in praise, while witnessing the people settled in their expected homes. But this cannot be granted. He may behold from Pisgah's summit. But his feet may not enter.

Wherefore? Sin is the cause. If there be misery, and shame, and disappointment, these bitter streams may all be traced to sin, as the sad source. At Meribah his faith had failed. Provoked, he spake and acted in unholy haste. His angry words—his blows inflicted on the rock—dishonoured God. He erred in presence of the host. And God must manifest displeasure. Moses is loved—pardoned—saved. But he suffers. His death on Pisgah stands as a beacon, warning of sin's precipice.

Children of God, beware. Be ever on your guard. Watch prayerfully your spirit, thoughts, and words. We move in midst of wide-spread nets. Our feet soon are entangled. And then there must be injury. We may repent, and bitter tears may flow. We may be mercifully snatched from everlasting pains. We may gain heaven. But still there always is a sorrow in sin's rear. Let this example settle deeply in your minds. Moses through sin may not cross Jordan.

This fact is perhaps expressive of another truth. The hands of Moses brought the tables of the law. He was its mediating channel. But this covenant can never convoy souls to heaven. It is weak to open those bright gates. It is feeble to ascend that lofty hill. Be taught, all ye, who seek acceptance through the code of Sinai. The effort to fulfil these terms is fool's play. It cannot prosper. It will surely fail. None enter, with one stain of guilt. None enter, without righteousness, as pure as God is pure. But the Law never can remove

stains. It never gives a covering for offence. It therefore admits not to God's presence. It never leads to the celestial rest.

Reader, whatever be your age or state, whatever be your privilege, one thing is surely true, you are black with countless sins. Turn, then, from the broken staff of moral guiltlessness to Jesus. He meets your every need. Leaning on His arm, you may pass Jordan's waves. Safe by His side you may attain true Canaan's joys. Pure in His righteousness, you may stand welcome before God.

But Moses on Pisgah not only warns: he also encourages to rapturous meditation: he leads us by the hand to precious thoughts. His eye thence traverses a wondrous circuit. Aided by superhuman power, he roams along the grand expanse of Israel's portion. From plain to plain—from vale to vale—from hill to hill, he wanders in entranced delight. What beauty—what fertility—enchant him! He sees the earthly home, so worthy of God's chosen sons.

Believer, is there no Pisgah, from which you, too, may gaze? There is. It is the Gospel-record. You should by frequent step ascend this hill. You should release your mind from the poor grovellings of earthly things. You should seek elevation for your heart in this chart and picture of the coming bliss.

Jesus invites you to this Pisgah. Without Him, indeed, your daily walk must be in a low marsh. Apart from Him, your horizon is confined—and hope has no watchtower of survey. But join yourself to Him. He will conduct you to a lofty seat, and open out a clear prospective of your sure heritage. Seated by Him, your eye may feast on promised mansions. He has indeed bought a rich country for you. And He gives the Gospel as the graphic map.

The Spirit, too, delights to meet you with enlightening aid. He will give power to apprehend this new Jerusalem; to count the towers; to go round the buttresses; to mark the palaces. He will confer that telescopic eye of faith, which scans the vales, the plains, the mountains, of your Canaan.

Bright, indeed, is the prospect. It reveals that glorious home, which is the recompense of Jesu's blood. But what can be a recompense for divine merit? We estimate things by their price, the price, which He presents, is infinite. The equivalent, which He wins, is heaven. This, then, must be a treasure beyond thought.

Again, think by whom these mansions are prepared. Eternal love suggests their plan. Infinite power executes. Therefore they must be infinitely perfect. Nothing can be absent, which can contribute to pure ecstacy.

But Jesus dwells there now, intent on their completion. They are wondrous words, "I go to prepare a place for you." His grace is an ocean without shore. Here it flows out in ceaseless employ. His might is boundless. Here it finds full exercise. Heaven, then, must be the concentrated blaze of all the happiness, which Jehovah can contrive and form. My soul, may you reach heaven! Cling to Jesus, and you cannot fail. Reader, may you reach heaven! Cling to Jesus, and you cannot fail.

Neglect not, then, the truth, that in the Gospel we are led to a Pisgah, whence we may survey this home. Let no one say, the prospect is so dazzling that mortal gaze cannot rest on it. True! the reality cannot be known by flesh and blood. Bodies, until transformed into the likeness of the Lord, cannot become inhabitants. True! heaven in all its blessedness exceeds our present thought. To know it fully, we must enjoy

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